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RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN as a boy in fancy dress,
from the original portrait
(in the possession of Algernon Sheridan, Esquire).

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SHERIDAN

FROM NEW AND ORIGINAL MATERIAL; INCLUDING A MANUSCRIPT DIARY BY GEORGIANA DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE

BY

WALTER SICHEL

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

"Mercury governs this book."

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

BOSTON & NEW YORK
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1909

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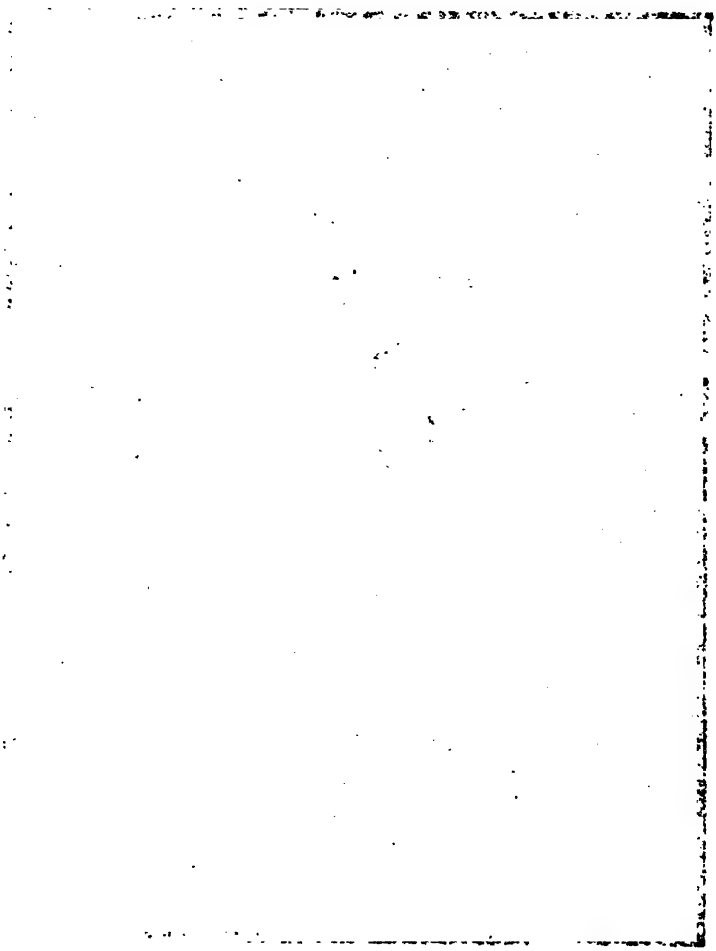

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GENERAL

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TO

GEORGE WILLIAM ERSKINE RUSSELL

A DEVOTED HARROVIAN AND AN OLD FRIEND,
WHOSE FATHER BORE THE NAMES OF
CHARLES JAMES FOX,

AND TO

CHARLES RUSSELL

A NEWER FRIEND, THE SON OF A DISTINGUISHED IRISHMAN,
THESE VOLUMES CONCERNING AN ILLUSTRIOUS
HARROVIAN, IRISHMAN AND FOXITE,

ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

195925

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"Pugnat sententia secum.
Quod petiit spernit; repetit quod nuper amisit;
Æstuat et vitæ disconvenit ordine toto."

HORACE.

"Thou art a friend indeed, and my only request shall be that you continue to love me and look on my imperfections with more affection than judgment."—SHERIDAN, *draft MS. for "Pizarro."*

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PREFACE

A COMPREHENSIVE Life of Sheridan has long been needed. He has too often been drawn in profile, yet he touched the world at every point and was thrown with all "the light and leading" of his generation. To attempt such a portrait without very full and original authorities would be sheer presumption. By aid of these alone can we hope to see his full face in private, his full length in politics, to complete his literary record and relate it to the events which prompted it, to restore the perspective of background.

My gratitude is due to each of those who have generously provided me with a store of important documents.

First and foremost, the kindness of the Sheridan family of Frampton Court gave me unreserved access to all their manuscripts, including much that Sheridan's two firsthand biographers, Thomas Moore and Fraser Rae, omitted, misunderstood, or overlooked. The Dowager Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava allowed me to use a mass of records chiefly affecting Sheridan's early life and ancestry. Lord Ilchester permitted an examination of the Holland House manuscripts, comprising, besides Lady Holland's Journal, which he has since ably edited, many Sheridan autographs, and papers bearing on his career, social and political. The late Duke of Devonshire was also good enough to let me search through the Devonshire House papers, which abound in illuminating matter, and among these I was fortunate enough to find a short Diary kept by Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire, from the autumn of 1788 to the beginning of 1789, a stirring period in which Sheridan bore a leading part. It establishes what I had suspected from other evidence, that the Prince of Wales's well-known "Letter to Mr. Pitt" was composed not by Burke, to whom it has long been credited, but by Sheridan. This journal, in every respect interesting, I am privileged to include in the Appendix to the second volume. Further, the courtesy of Mr. J. P. LeFanu placed at my disposal the whole

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manuscript correspondence of Sheridan's sister, Elizabeth, which explains much in the letters both of the first Mrs. Sheridan and of her husband's elder sister, Alicia. He has also furnished some letters written to the latter by Mrs. Sheridan in 1782 at Harrow, transcripts of which will be found in the same Appendix. A quantity, too, of manuscript materials, autograph and otherwise, exists in the treasure-house of the British Museum; these have all been utilised. And last, not least, must be mentioned a most helpful series of autograph letters from Sheridan to Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire and her sister Lady Bessborough, which are in my own possession, and have been here incorporated. The main portion takes the form of a letter-journal written while Sheridan's first wife lay dying at the Hot Wells during the summer of 1792. Authentic beyond question, and striking as human documents, these letters cast several sidelights on his past career, and supply some new and picturesque details of his second duel with Mathews. Two letters to Lady Bessborough, dashed off in the House of Commons, are graphic sketches of debates at the opening of the new century. With these were acquired a few fresh documents forwarded partly by eye-witnesses of the French Revolution, partly by the Duke of Dorset and others: two of them allude to the efforts made at Devonshire House to save the life of Marie Antoinette. And outside these, I obtained some new autograph compositions by Sheridan himself, and one of those early manuscript copies of "The School for Scandal" which he presented to his friends before the comedy was published. A very early transcript of the fourth Act of that play also came into my hands with other original matter too manifold to enumerate. Family information, too, has kindly been supplied by Captain R. Ford, a direct descendant of the Dr. Ford who first helped Sheridan to acquire Drury Lane Theatre, and by Mr. Hall, whose ancestor, the line-engraver to George the Third, was one of Sheridan's earliest friends.

The "Sheridan Manuscripts" comprise the originals of all his plays except "The Rivals." His autograph of that comedy is believed to have perished in a fire at Covent Garden, but at Frampton Court is a copy of its first edition, annotated

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apparently by Mrs. Sheridan herself. As regards "The School for Scandal," the whole process of its evolution is traceable through the early fragments out of which it emerged, and the first prompt-books which remain with Sheridan's own corrections. All the notes, too, for his speeches, except a few in the British Museum, belong to these heirlooms, and they are most relevant to the varied phases of his public career. Most of his literary work and many of the family epistles, including the delightful correspondence of his wife and her sister Mrs. Tickell, are to be found in the same lengthy series, which includes several of the former's lyrics. Most of these Sheridan papers have become disjointed, and it has been no small labour to arrange them in sequence.

I have again to express my debt of thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Algernon Sheridan, as well as to Mr. Wilfred Sheridan, for allowing me to use their Sheridan books, which have been supplemented by many other rarities of Sheridan literature, some of them unique, and all shedding additional light. A remarkable ode, "The General Fast," which Sheridan wrote at the outset of the American War, and his "Ode to Scandal," which on scrutiny must be pronounced genuine, find a place in the Appendix to the first volume. So also do two unpublished poems, one—on "Poor Lucy"—from the Sheridan manuscripts; the other—"To Eliza on Ceasing to Sing"—from the autograph collection of Mr. Broadley, who kindly offered it, with a Linley letter, while these sheets were going to press.

Sheridan's life falls naturally into two divisions: literary and political. From first to last much in both has remained unknown, and many misunderstandings have arisen which need to be cleared up or corrected. At almost every turn of the road—and it is long—the fresh clues yielded by a combination of original sources point to paths diverging from some of those hitherto accepted, though, at the same time, I am under obligation for informing material to the biographies of Moore and Rae. In the literary part, which discloses new and co-ordinates old matter, I have tried to cull a Sheridan anthology, while the manuscripts of the plays have been collated with

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every known and some unknown editions. In the historical part, Adolphus's documentary chronicle has often been used to check accounts less authentic; no contemporary book or paper of real relevance has been neglected; special attention has been paid to pamphlets which, even when partisan, are excellent interpreters of prevalent feeling. Original letters from Burke, Fox, and others have contributed to my conclusions, while several of the "Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports" go far to illustrate events and character. Nor has the bearing of autograph excerpts in auction catalogues been neglected.

Throughout, the social aspect is interwoven. Both politically and personally it is needful to get behind the scenes, to look before and after, and to guard against any judgment imperfectly informed. Sheridan's dealings with contemporary men and women, his attitude towards Ireland and America, his relations to the Prince and the Whig party, the inner side of political intrigue, and the whole range of his speeches, all find fresh illustration. For the first time his public career has been pursued, and his parliamentary voice is audible.

The "Overture" (prologue for choice, but epilogue if the reader chooses) may serve to put the man and his environment into distinct categories, and to dispose of many pertinent details which would otherwise impede the narrative. It seeks to psychologise a temperament and a time, and to map out much that contributes to their elucidation. It is hoped that the portrayal from manuscript sources of the charming Linley family, the fresh characterisation of Mrs. Sheridan and her sister, the historical vignettes, with those of Mrs. Crewe, Mrs. Bouverie, and the Duchess of Devonshire, may prove not the least interesting part of this endeavour to reanimate Sheridan.

The Bibliography of Sheridan's works, both published and unpublished, will, it is hoped, be of service alike to students and collectors. With regard to the printed compositions, Mr. John P. Anderson's catalogue (in Mr. Lloyd C. Sanders's monograph on Sheridan) is indispensable as a foundation, but his list has been largely supplemented and in one instance amended.

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PREFACE

The catalogue of Sheridan's unprinted compositions contains much that is entirely new.

My best thanks are further due to Mr. Charles Letts for allowing me to see another early prompt-book of "The School for Scandal"; to Mrs. Strong for her kind assistance at Devonshire House; to Mrs. Clement Parsons for suggesting some details; to my friend Mr. Seccombe for his invaluable help with the proofs; and to Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan, once more, for allowing the reproduction of some family portraits and the facsimile of two pages of "The School for Scandal" from the original autograph. The illustrations comprise several rare likenesses, and to each of their owners I am grateful for permission to reproduce them. Mr. Lionel Phillips's portrait of Sheridan by Romney, Sir Edward Stracey's later portrait of him by Lawrence, two other presentments of him, the LeFanu pictures of the Sheridan sisters, and the delicate drawing by Bartolozzi of the Duchess of Devonshire, have been hitherto unseen. That of her by Downman is here taken from the original, while Ozias Humphry's likeness of the first Mrs. Sheridan has been reproduced from the beautiful water-colour at Frampton Court. The fine Cosway miniature of her from Miss Beare's collection is also unfamiliar. The Gainsborough portraits include one of Sheridan's antagonist, Mathews. Messrs. Agnew have sanctioned the reproduction of their mezzotint of the second Mrs. Tickell, and the photograph of the Sheridans' Bath dwelling will be viewed with interest. A short note at the close of the second Appendix deals with the whole range of Sheridan portraits.

No one can be more conscious than I am of the difficulties in a task so complex. Much has to be retold. Vividness, discernment, grasp, interpretation, are requisites hard to combine. Sheridan has by turns been taken too seriously and too lightly. As a wit he would have smiled, as a statesman he would have sighed, and perhaps he might have echoed his own Dangle in "The Critic": "Egad! I think the interpreter is the hardest to be understood of the two."

WALTER SICHEL.

June, 1909.

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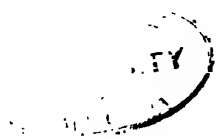
BOOK I

HIS LITERARY CAREER

[1751—1780]



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OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

SHERIDAN

OVERTURE

THE MAN AND THE MOMENT

PART I.—THE MAN

"How shall we find the concord of this discord?"

1. THE last century carried its passion for individualism into the realm of biography. It held it an easy matter to play a solo upon a great man. The career of Sheridan rejects this barbarous simplicity of treatment—as Hamlet repudiated the artless fingering of Guildenstern. The multiplicity of this man and his connections requires an orchestra, in the conduct of which it will tax all our powers to harmonise the discords.

Sheridan was neither the low poltroon nor deliberate Scapin that some have limned him, with "colouring too dark," as Snake puts it in "The School for Scandal," and "outlines too extravagant." Nor can he be dismissed by M. Taine's "brilliant scamp," a cursory label attached by contemporaries to Beaumarchais also.[1] Still less was he the monster of scavengers who revel in what Byron termed "the life and libel line."[2] He was not the phantom of

[1] "Histoire de la Litt. Anglaise," "Un brilliant mauvais sujet." Beaumarchais was called "un vaurien."

[2] Sir Thomas Lawrence repeated to Sir Walter Scott, on the hearsay evidence of Samuel Rogers, some stories so gross that they refute themselves. Cf. Lockhart's "Life of Scott" (1903), p. 425. Rogers, however, according to Byron, was always venomously inclined, and Rogers himself admitted that contemporaries are usually prejudiced observers. Cf. his "Table-Talk," p. 103. Sir Jonah Barrington, writing in 1827, and commenting on the way in which biographers had used Sheridan as a "chopping-block," and had "placed the mane of the lion upon the shoulders

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unrealities damned with faint praise by Moore, a "favourable enemy," with one of his eyes fixed on Holland House while he wrote, and both of them cursed by it afterwards.[1] Least of all was he the rose-water liberal and high-souled enthusiast of his last biographer, Mr. Rae, who has scrubbed him with Sunday soap till he shines like one of Wilkie's peasants. Sheridan's words in the Preface to his first though joint production, "The Love Epistles of Aristænetus," seem to fit some of these presentments; they are, "it is true, a portrait of the author, and a portrait that has some resemblance to him, but it is painted in a bad attitude and placed in a disadvantageous light."[2] And his own description of the pictures in "The School for Scandal," "devoid of inveterate likeness" and "quite independent of *you*," may describe some others in the long gallery of his portraits. His proportions have been buried under details or lost in generalities, and they lack perspective. He seems inconsequent and incoherent. Nor is this wonderful in the case of a man so untypical, so whimsically compounded of good and evil, so disconnected in his habits, intellect, and feelings. Political rancour and personal resentment are now a century old, and fresh lights are available. To picture him aright, neither whitewash nor blacklead is wanted, but some power of discerning an organisation at once singular and subtle. Its nature and growth were both intricate. It is necessary to resolve the one and to disentangle the other, if more than a bowing acquaintance is to be made; if, in fine, some kind of conspect is to replace a kaleidoscope of glimpses and aspects. In the process, it must be owned, reflection will often stand on

of a mountebank," says that their ignorance is "conspicuous from their entire omission of some of the most interesting events in his career." Cf. "Sketches," Vol. I., p. 299.

[1] Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. V., p. 16 (1825), where he notes that none of his "high Whig friends" were pleased. Cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 61, 127. The Sheridan MSS. comprise a letter of January, 1826, in which Moore refers to "the storm" raised by his book. "Favourable enemy" is from Congreve. Molière too, in his preface to "Tartuffe," speaks of those "qui me damnent par charité."

[2] The Preface was in great part Sheridan's. Cf. *post*, p. 189.

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guard against impulse, while reason itself will be swayed by the marked contrast between features manifest in family correspondence and the stray impressions or prejudices of contemporaries; by the sharp distinction moreover, not only between parts of his public and private life, but also between the brightness of his zenith and the stèps of his pitiful decline,

> "Like the sweet blossoms of the may
> Whose fragrance ends in must."

It is not enough to sum him up from the outside as an eccentric Bohemian, a witty and eloquent Irishman, a scapegrace, disfigured by growing infirmities against which he struggled in vain; or to note that posterity has pardoned the same infirmities in Steele, also a scapegrace, an eccentric Bohemian, a witty and eloquent Irishman. These are facts, but they are not truths; they do not pierce below the surface. Both as author and parliamentarian, Sheridan ranks far higher than Steele.

2. Sheridan was beyond everything a sentimentalist, and an Anglo-Irish sentimentalist of the eighteenth century. Nowhere is this feature more prominent than in his striking letters to the Duchess of Devonshire and her sister incorporated with this work. His inner texture is Shandeian. He had of course many other and robuster sides to his being: his dare-devilry from his early adventures to the part which he played twenty-six years later at the trial of the rebel O'Connor, his vigour, and, notably, his keen sense of humour which braced and chastened the sentimentality. But his first letters and love lyrics are pure sentiment, a strong spice of it flavours his speeches also, while in two early sets of verse he has shown how to sentiment he could wed simplicity.[1] The strain is audible even in the two comedies[2] which tilted against the

[1] Cf. App. A. 1 and 2.

[2] The original sketches for "The School for Scandal" were much more sentimental than the finished play. Here is one specimen. Lady Sneerwell says to Maria, "Go, forget the affection I have showed you, forget that I have been a mother to you whom I found an orphan; go, break through all ties of gratitude and expose me to the world's derision to avoid

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gushing vogue of a day when Rousseau was dominant in England and Sheridan's brother-in-law Tickell sang of "the fair Stoic,"

> "She leans on Sentiment to soothe the void,
> Deep in Rousseau her purer thoughts approve
> The metaphysics of Platonic love."[1]

In the rough, then, Sheridan offers a study in sentiment. Round this he revolves, and it explains much in him that would otherwise remain a riddle. It is his central aspect, and all other clues to his nature radiate from it.

We shall have more to say of the sentimentalist, but it is clear that by constantly treading the pavement of good intentions he wears it down and often works as much harm as if his foothold consisted of less flimsy and glittering material. He too frequently mistakes mood for character, spirits for sympathy, and whim for will. He suffers from the different hues of the self which he feels and that which others resent and sometimes misconstrue. He is at once martyr and persecutor, and in both characters, if, like Sheridan, he belongs to the Georgians, he goes off the lines at a period when the lines were many and sentimentalism was complex. The base of Sheridan's nature was good, but by virtue of his sentimentality he often came to be romantic where he ought to have been moral; childish where he should have been experienced; sensuous, even sensual, where he ought to have been loving; dependent on the outward where he should have been self-poised. The material standards of his generation overwhelmed a native simplicity, which however still prevailed in his adherence to causes and courses which spelled absolute failure. His sentimentality at

one sullen hour from a moody lover." Sheridan MSS. Sheridan intended to intersperse long love passages. Cf. *post*, p. 130. Falkland and Julia in "The Rivals" were not introduced merely to catch the mob, but proceeded from the author's temperament. His tragedy "Pizarro" (refashioned from the sentimental Kotzebue) is in great part sentimentality on stilts.

[1] "The Wreath of Fashion, or the Art of Sentimental Poetry" (1778), by Richard Tickell. Tickell also wrote "Anticipation," a political skit of 1778, the greater part of which seems to have been due to Sheridan. Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 223.

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least saved him from the Baal-worship of success. He was identified with many struggles, although he could lose himself in none, and if he lacked faith in the highest, he preserved a frank belief in human nature and its possibilities. These rough outlines are not without noble exceptions, and throughout his prodigalities we may say of him what Voltaire said of Beaumarchais: "Sa näiveté m'enchante, je lui pardonne ses imprudences et petulances." He remains one of those naughty children of genius who, amid all their frailties, are still human and lovable.

3. It is easier to class Sheridan as a comet than to give his psychology, which, if it could be rendered in music, would prove a *scherzo serioso*, a strange medley of tears and laughter. For Sheridan was not merely a free lance and fantastic rebel like the late Lord Randolph Churchill;[1] he was also what Heine has termed another, "the knight of the laughing tear." A constitutional melancholy neighboured his mirth, the irony of things underlay his gayest outbursts, and his mind, like that of his frolicsome forerunner the comic Farquhar, was frequently "dressed in black."[2] He would have agreed with Richardson's "I am forced to make myself laugh that I may not cry"; with Beaumarchais' "Je me presse de rire de tout de peur d'être obligé d'en pleurer"; with Byron's

> "And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
> 'Tis that I may not weep."

It is the never hackneyed instance of Yorick without his cap and bells, of Pierrot dissolved in pathos. Those who acclaim their

[1] Wilberforce quotes Sheridan's protest before delivering a speech on Irish affairs in 1807, "Consider, I have not made one rebellious speech the whole session. I must make one." Cf. "Wilberforce's Corr.," Vol. II., p. 106.

[2] Cf. Farquhar's "Portrait" of himself. "As to the mind which in most men wears as many changes as their body, so in me 'tis usually dressed in black. Melancholy is its everyday apparel, and it has hitherto found few holidays to change its clothes. In short, my constitution is very splenetic and very amorous."

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quips or are touched by their whimsies, only think of them as mimes all "paint and proverb." "Celui qui rit et celui qui fait rire sont deux hommes fort différents." Their audience will hardly follow them into the slipshod retreats where the wounds of body and spirit shame their despisers, and vindicate their vagaries. Prior, singing "Bannissons la mélancolie," at Madame de Tencin's, was such another. Nor is this contrast confined to worldlings. "Indeed, I wonder," writes Cowper in one of his marvellous letters, "that a sportive thought should ever enter the door of my intellect, as if Harlequin should intrude himself into the gloomy chambers where a corpse is deposited in state."

Beaumarchais' biographer remarks that his boyhood was free from the dejection so often characteristic of comedians.[1] With Sheridan it was otherwise. We find this vein in his Harrow schooldays, when, as he assured the prying Creevey, he was "a very low-spirited boy, much given to crying when alone.[2] We find it shadowing his youth, when he unburdened his heart to his early friend, Thomas Grenville, in the autumn of 1772, and told him that he had always felt "something within that gives a check to my most pleasurable ideas, something that will anticipate ovation, that contradicts my best passions, repines at the enjoyment of them and cries out 'non est tanti'"; something that made him almost doubt whether he was not happiest when he had some "real trouble of his own." We find it overclouding his prime, when he dreamed that perhaps the East Burnham cottage, where he had spent his rapturous honeymoon, might recall a peace of heart which had vanished, or when, in one of his letters to the Duchess of Devonshire, he sighs that, so many were his entanglements, he

[1] Loménie's "Beaumarchais," Vol. I., p. 62. Victor Hugo, however, insisted that this melancholy was inherent not only in Beaumarchais, but in Molière and Shakespeare.

[2] "The Creevey Papers," Vol I., p. 53; and cf. Sheridan's own account of the same period to Lord Holland in "Further Memoirs of the Whig Party," p. 240. "He was slighted by the masters and tormented by the boys as a poor player's son."

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had almost desired to lie down and die.[1] As he grew older, he would often declaim in his finely modulated voice those touching lines from Dryden's "Palamon and Arcite":

> "Vain men! How vanishing a bliss we crave,
> Now warm in love, now withering in the grave;
> Never, oh! nevermore to see the sun,
> Still dark in a damp vault and still alone."[2]

The same tone pervades a song which he composed for a musical after-piece, almost Della Cruscan in character:

> "Melancholy, friend to Grief,
> Ever o'er my spirit reign,
> To my sorrows bring relief,
> And thyself inspire my strain.
>
> "When thy sadness can impart
> All its healing, softening powers,
> Then thy tears are to the heart
> Like the falling dew to flowers";[3]

[1] "Sheridan to the Duchess of Devonshire" [*circ.* 1789], from the delightful series transcribed for the first time at the end of this work. For the previous instance, cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 135.

[2] "Table-Talk" of Samuel Rogers, p. 30, and for Sheridan's love of Dryden, cf. M. Kelly's "Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 312. Lord Brougham is mistaken in presuming this to be a "professed" fondness (cf. "Statesmen of the Time of George III.," Vol. I., p. 25); a whole list of Dryden's works remains among the Sheridan MSS.; and Fox, too, was devoted to Dryden and quoted him in a speech of June, 1803. Cf. "Fox's Corr.," Vol. III., p. 225. Sheridan's Prologues and Epilogues are often written in Dryden's manner. It will be remembered that Disraeli (in some respects comparable with Sheridan) used often in his later years to cite the melancholy stanza of Gray's "Elegy," ending with "The paths of Glory lead but to the grave." The "Vanity of human wishes," however, is a refrain as old as Ecclesiastes. As to the sweetness of Sheridan's voice, it is emphasised by Coleridge in his sonnet on Sheridan, by tutor Smyth in his "Memoir" (p. 2), and by Brougham, who speaks of his "deep, clear voice" ("Statesmen of the Time of George III.," Vol. I., p. 31), though he adds that at times his utterance was thick. Though musical, in singing he could only make "a sort of rumbling noise." Cf. Kelly's "Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 145.

[3] These are two out of four stanzas from a piece intended apparently to be called "The Governor." Sheridan's manuscript of the play is among those accidentally found and presented to the British Museum by Mr.

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and the following stanza still remains in his second wife's handwriting:

"Alas! how quickly joy is past,
How swiftly Spring and Summer flee,
How those who sleep must wake at last,
However sweet their dreams may be."

"I shall become a *Z*immermanian," he told her in 1809, "I know a nice spot for my cell." "I can safely swear," he repeated the next year, "that I never pass a day, or an hour almost, without having present to my mind the probability of one's last hour being nearer than the accomplishment of the most immediate object of our hopes and pursuits"; and again in an earlier letter, "But then comes the silent hour that asks 'How long will you want expanse of space on earth?'"[1] This mood, which throughout his life went hand in hand with high spirits and airy wit, was not the fruit of disappointment, rather it belonged to his self-centred being. His sad gaiety not only proved his armour against enemies and a society that resents wretchedness, but against himself also. Like Garrick in the picture, he stands halting between the Muses of Comedy and Tragedy. Like his own Charles Surface, his "distresses were so many that he could not afford to part with his spirits."[2] True it is that both the party and the prince that used and abused his great powers requited them with ingratitude; that the friends who hung round his neck with rapture after the Begum Speech of 1787 in the House of Commons, left him in the lurch when his decay set in; that Fox, whom he had so

Patmore, Eg. MS. 25937. The rough draft of the verses remains among the Sheridan MSS., and they are quoted by Mr. Fitzgerald in his "Lives of the Sheridans," Vol. I., p. 211. It should be added with regard to Sheridan's melancholy that among the poems of others found (and often conned) among his papers is Shakespeare's "Come away, Come away Death."

[1] Sheridan MSS.

[2] Mrs. Tickell noticed this resemblance in a letter to Mrs. Sheridan of 1783: "I hope he hasn't many plagues, though there's no judging by his manner, for, like Charles in 'The School for Scandal,' his spirits and distresses generally rise together."

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often shielded,[1] came to suspect his every movement; that Fox's gentle nephew, Lord Holland, whom Sheridan loved, belittled him behind his back while he humoured him to his face; and that the fascinating Georgiana of Devonshire, who had courted and caressed the prodigy of her youth, turned a cold shoulder on one who to the last regarded her with undiminished tenderness. True also, that he waited till 1806 for the privy councillorship which jealousy grudged even to Burke till sixteen years of parliamentary predominance compelled it; true, that like Burke also he was excluded from a promised seat in the Cabinet; and true, that for the last eight years of his life he was half ostracised by politicians who affected to be popes and, immured in their mock Vatican, excommunicated the jesting heretic outside.[2] But ingratitude did not ruffle

[1] To single out one instance—that when Sheridan defended Fox in February, 1793, against Burke's imputation of "stratagem": "If ever there was a man who disdained stratagems by nature, who knew how to distinguish between craft and wisdom, between crookedness and policy, who loved the straight path, and sometimes even without looking to the end, because it was straight, it was the very person whom he now arraigns for craft and trick." He proceeded to an eloquent defence on other grounds. "Speeches," Vol. II., p. 149.

[2] Cf. the latter chapters of Vol. II. For the preceding, cf. Sheridan MSS. (a letter respecting the Duchess of Devonshire's illness); and for Sheridan's love of Lord Holland, a letter about 1812 to his second wife about "the joyous dear manner" in which he "ran like a schoolboy, lame as he is, to catch me by the hand" when he saw him coming up Berkeley Square—"which quite affected me. He is an excellent creature, and the only public man I have any attachment to." Sheridan MSS., and cited by Mr. Fraser Rae, Vol. II., p. 224. For the way in which Lord Holland spoke of Sheridan, cf. his "Memoirs of the Whig Party," his "Further Memoirs"; Moore's "Journal," *passim;* and *post*, p. 69. Speaking to Moore, then engaged on his biography, of Sheridan's eloquence, he put things in the following pleasant manner: "The overstrained notions he had of perfection were very favourable to his style of oratory in giving it a certain elevation of tone and dignity of thought." Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 187. And for Fox's dislike of Sheridan's independence, cf. (*inter multa alia*) "Fox's Corr.," Vol. III., p. 240, where, in August, 1803, Fox, hitherto captious, praises Sheridan for voting with him in the matter of the Prince of Wales' offer to serve in the Army: "And, what is most wonderful of all, *for taking no distinct line of his own.*"

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Sheridan's ironical calm. He concealed mortification and insult, shrugged his shoulders, passed on and smiled. Nor was the smile sour; a *roué* he sometimes was, but even politics never made him a cynic. His sprightliness seemed to spring from the soil of unhappiness, like the wild blossoms that flourish in bleak places. It was bitter-sweet, like Beaumarchais' irony and Heine's. Beaumarchais, indeed, makes his Figaro solve the problem of "a philosophy so gay" by answering, "the custom of adversity." So it often fared with Sheridan, who, even if he had been prudent, would never have been contented. He was rarely satisfied with his successes, and when Lady Lucan[1] complimented his "angelic" bride on being proud to please a man who already pleased all the world, the romantic beauty might well have quoted of the fastidious wit:

> "Toujours mécontent de ce qu'il vient de faire
> Il plait à tout le monde, et ne sçaurait se plaire."

Constantly, in triumph as in excess, we can discern the aching heart of one who was alone in the crowd; and this it was that Byron realised when he wrote of Sheridan's detractors:

> "Ah! little do they know
> That what to them seemed vice might be but woe."

4. This initial contrast, however, only preludes a long list of them, and Sheridan was what Burke said of another, "a candidate for contradictory honours." The antitheses of his character are as pointed as those in his comedies; indeed perhaps antithesis alone can express them. He was a continual paradox, a tissue of second natures, parentheses, and surprises. Pieces of his essence belong to his heredity and his century, but the whole and the combination were peculiar to himself. He proved by turns a sweetener of life and impossible to live with; the pink of punctilio, yet a prey to shifts which generosity

[1] The artistic wife of Charles Bingham, created Earl of Lucan in 1796. Sarsfield, titular Earl of Lucan, and General to James II., was, curiously enough, related to the earlier Sheridans through his mother. Cf. the Pedigree, *post*, p. 205 and *seq.*

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endeared at a time when debt was almost a national habit;[1] in a toping age one of the few who deplored a degradation signally baneful to the highly-strung, a craving which could not subdue his mind, which at times he nearly overcame but which gained on him by fatal degrees till at the close his visage appeared, as Byron describes it, "the upper part that of a god, while below he showed the satyr."[2] A partisan, he grew to rise above faction; an adventurer, he was no opportunist; a courtier, he remained unpliant and went rewardless; often at the beck of things, he was never at the beck of persons; unheroic, he died the lifelong friend of losing causes.

So, too, with his faculties. His demeanour, even and exquisitely urbane; his judgment, sound and sagacious for everyone but himself, the nice polish of his style, his boyishness, too, and sheer love of fun, compose a foreground at variance with the rude chaos behind it. Where he surpassed his fellows as where he fell short of them, he was always above or below the normal. Even his virtues were disastrous, and his "good heart" was praised by its very victims, himself included. He was at once direct and oblique. His errors offended not so much by their kind which was common to hosts of contemporaries, as by their oddity; so that his very sins were original. His indolence, too, was only matched by exertions redoubled whenever he was crossed,[3] and often as various as they were herculean. Mrs. Sheridan's letters show that in 1788 alone, he sat up working night after night for the party "councils" till

[1] For the whole subject, cf. *post*, pp. 148—153. His best friend, the talented Joseph Richardson, said that before ambition led Sheridan into the vortex of heartless fashion "he had the most upright disposition. . . . Sheridan was indeed good-natured, and if he had been a man of fortune, would not only have been a man of nice honour, . . . but a liberal patron." "Records of My Life," by John Taylor, Vol. II., pp. 184, 264.

[2] Medwin's "Conversations," Vol. II., p. 22.

[3] In 1809 Sheridan's son Tom wrote to Charles Ward, the husband of his aunt, Jane Linley, "You partake of his eagerness to pursue an object when he is opposed." Cf. Eg. MS. 1976, f. 19. In his rough draft for "Hernan's Miscellany" (1770) Sheridan brings this trait into his character of Crabtree. Sheridan MSS.

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eight in the morning,[1] and that in 1789 he had but a month's holiday in the whole year, while Mrs. Tickell records how "indefatigable" he was "in politics." He could work like a racehorse and idle like a lizard. To "Idleness," indeed, he actually dedicated Tickell's copy of "The Rivals," and so far he resembled the mercurial Fox, who wrote that he loved idleness as "the first of earthly blessings."[2] He resembled Fox again in that "ruminating silence" which was observed long afterwards in Disraeli. At the age of twenty-three he wrote in his unpublished comments on "Chesterfield's Letters," "Hurry, *he* says, from play to study and never be doing nothing. *I* say frequently be unemployed, sit and think."[3] While his sister Elizabeth stayed with him during the Regency intrigues of 1788, she noticed him at dinner so immersed in thought that he hardly seemed to take notice of anyone.[4] When Fox at the end of a session rejoiced at the near prospect of lying under the trees at St. Anne's with a book, "Quite so," replied Sheridan, "but why with a book?" Yet throughout the dilatoriness of his course moved a spring and energy of step, and the spur of an ambition urged in the first instance by the same vexations which had pricked and racked the great Dean, his grandfather's domineering friend. It were cant to belittle that incentive. Burke himself, referring to Charles Townshend, the meteoric Chancellor of the Exchequer, who in many side-paths had been Sheridan's weaker prototype, thus delivered himself in his fine speech on American taxation: " . . . he had no failings which were not owing to a noble cause, to an ardent, generous, perhaps immoderate passion for fame, a passion which is the instinct of all great souls." Yet Sheridan's ambition would

[1] Mrs. Tickell's letters say the same of 1786. The Prince, too, used to rout him out of bed for advice. Sheridan MSS. Cf., too, Sheridan's raillery about sleep in "The Duenna," Act I., Sc. II.: "A little sleep once in a week or so." "No, no, sir, I don't mention your low-bred, vulgar, sound sleep."

[2] "Fox's Corr.," Vol. IV., p. 72. For this sentiment he cites the authority of Burke.

[3] Sheridan MSS.

[4] Miss E. Sheridan's letters to Mrs. LeFanu. LeFanu MSS.

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seldom yield to his wilfulness, and what Congreve puts into the mouth of "Mirabel" concerning lovers might aptly be transferred to Congreve's literary successor, "A fellow that lives in a windmill has not a more whimsical dwelling . . . there is no point of the compass to which it cannot turn and by which it is not turned. Motion, not method, is his occupation." But, on the other hand, Burke's eulogy is well offset by Dr. Johnson's moralisation: "The desire for fame not regulated is as dangerous as that for money."[1]

He was consistent but to few of the accepted canons; and the very discords of his disorder strike the ear with a semblance of harmony that counterfeits art, but really springs from nature. To use a phrase now popular, there was something "subliminal" about Sheridan, an invisible element below the surface and clashing with it. Not only did a sort of regular irregularity or equipoise of derangement lurk in the recesses of his mind, a perverse pattern forming almost a principle of action, but there was something subtler also that impeded or retarded the talents which nevertheless shot out of it. All his light, as it were, seemed to struggle through an opaque medium, and the suddenness of his fire to flash out of a kind of slow and smouldering combustion. His sanguine vitality often appeared anæmic, yet beneath that inertness lurked a reserve force of arrested vigour. Constantly, too, a show of rashness and imprudence disguised real and solid good sense; in his waywardness there was purpose, and a method even in the litter of his mind. Audacious he was, yet fundamentally diffident, and he found pleasure in coquetting with his doubts. He looked ahead even when most unwary, but circumstance compelled him to live from hand to mouth, not only in finance, but in the knowledge perforce gathered to suit occasion, mastered with incredible speed, yet doled out with a sparing caution. Ease and effort neighboured each other, and thus his real alertness seemed to many a pose, when only the material which it improved was studied. Again, some viewed him as a born intriguer because eagerly as he fed on the excitement

[1] "Piozzi Letters," Vol. II., p. 72.

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which broke his torpors, he relished far more his keen resource in devising it, and the byways of its pursuit. Pursuit indeed, as he avowed to his first confidant, Grenville, always allured him rather than possession, for, in words which sound almost like his own, "The want of a thing is perplexing enough, but the possession of it is intolerable."[1] Nor was he always pursuing; he was just as skilful in evading the lure as in dangling round it, and so to the bitter end he seems parti-coloured, alternately dashing and patient, phlegmatic and volatile, smart and dishevelled; always on the rebound, often found wanting in the scales and then striking the beam. His veiled versatility may be compared to the quicksilver which looks dull and heavy behind a mirror, yet causes the smooth and lively surface that reflects the room.

Contrasts like these showed in a countenance by turns listless and lambent. Its half-heaviness was lit up by the comedy of his smile, the audacity of his air, and the fire of eyes abnormally brilliant, as Reynolds noted in Sheridan's youth, Byron in his age, and he himself on his deathbed, when he sent the message to Lady Bessborough that they would "look up to the coffin-lid as brightly as ever"; of eyes so lustrous that tutor Smyth remembered to have seen them by night "glowing through the bars and outshining the lamps of the carriage."[2]

5. The same contrast is visible in his manuscripts, which often

[1] Vanbrugh, "The Confederacy," Act I., Sc. III. Clarissa there begins her sentence, "I always know what I lack, but I am never pleased with what I have." This, too, describes Sheridan, who, in one of our new letters speaks of his "restless, contriving temper." Cf. App., Vol. II., 4 (i).

[2] Smyth's "Memoir," p. 23. For the message to Lady B., cf. Rogers' "Table-Talk," p. 70. For Reynolds, cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 184. He noticed that the pupils were abnormally large; ("an eye of peculiar brilliancy and fire") cf. Medwin's "Conversations," Vol. II., p. 22. Mrs. Cholmondeley, Peg Woffington's sister, who married Horace Walpole's clergyman-kinsman, called Sheridan's eyes "superb," cf. Smith's "Book for a Rainy Day" (new illustrated edition), p. 146. Brougham also, who only saw him in age, noticed that they were "singularly piercing" and "never winked," cf. "Statesmen of the Time of George III.," Vol. I., p. 31. They were of a dark hazel colour according to Smyth, cf. "Memoir," pp. 18, 56. But cf. *post*, p. 183, n. 1.

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start with lines that seem groping and fumbling in darkness till a master-stroke calls forth a spark which becomes a flame. So also with his best political speeches. They were frequently planned, it is true, but his disjointed notes for them are often as much occupied with dry or arithmetical detail as with ornamental figures. The rehearsal for their sallies dated from his boyhood, for, the son of a rhetorician, he was an orator born and trained, with an infinite fund of illustration in his retentive memory. It is a mistake to suppose because many of his tropes remain with variants on paper that the note-book was indispensable. Moore, who picked out the decorative bits, originated this notion, and Moore, who forgot that Sheridan was naturally ornate, has much over-laboured his point of Sheridan's elaborateness.[1] All witty orators ring the changes on their good things, but none the less they can improvise also. Much of Sheridan's best eloquence was on the spur of the moment, and among the masses of his memoranda I have found none for his thrilling appeals during the two mutinies of 1797. His brilliant speech on the Additional Forces Bill in 1804 was resumed without interruption after the loss of his notes—a loss declared amid laughter to be one that Pitt would hardly regret. His *tour-de-force* in reply to the Warren Hastings defence was the work of five days and nights, as Smyth, who wondered at the feat, assures us. Many of his most telling passages—notably from 1803 to 1805—were sudden answers after his main attacks had been delivered. He was quick in

[1] The stock passage, for instance, on Napoleon, in the speech of 1807 on the State of Ireland, is very slightly indicated in the notes for it given in Moore's "Memoir," Vol. II., p. 353, and it has been spoiled as usual in the published edition of his speeches (Vol. III., p. 535) by the reporter's tawdry additions. The true version runs: "His Martello towers are thrones, sceptres are the palisadoes of his entrenchments, his sentinels are sovereigns." Sheridan's notes for this sentence run thus: ". . . erecting thrones—Martello towers . . . B. fences with sceptres—his Martello towers are thrones—he alone is France." There are other notes on a separate sheet which Moore fails to mark. Here is a fine sentence: "You must meet the exigency with a noble front. You must lift up the minds of the People, and to do that, you must elevate your own. The example must spring from the People." Sheridan MSS.

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repartee, as he showed at the start when he at once parried Pitt's taunts about Drury Lane by allotting him the part of the "angry boy" in "The Alchemist," and not long afterwards he surprised the House by capping quotations from Milton, Shakespeare and the Scriptures. Wittier instances will occur as we proceed, but it has been forgotten how sharply he could return the set onslaughts of his assailants. An instance happened in 1794 when Burke, then Pitt's champion, rebuked him for a long speech on the Volunteers by quoting an American rhyme at the outset of the war:

> "Solid men of Boston, banish strong potations,
> Solid men of Boston, make no long orations,
> With a bow, wow, wow."

And Sheridan at once struck off some doggerel alluding to Burke's present plight, and taken, as he gravely added, from the same approved author.[1]

He originated "Defence, not Defiance," and "The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street"; he revived Bolingbroke's "Peace with Honour," which Disraeli repeated; he invented the description of Fox's last ministry as "All the Talents." His passing jest referring to John Robinson, member for Harwich, "I could name him as soon as I could name Jack Robinson," stereotyped an adage, just as "easy writing's vile hard reading" from his earliest satire, "I own the soft impeachment" or "like Cerberus three gentlemen at once" from "The Rivals," and "no scandal about Queen Elizabeth" from "The Critic," have passed into proverbs. His readiness was shown in 1799 when to Pitt's smiles at his denunciation of the project of Union he retorted, "Yes, the right honourable gentleman may smile at his pledges! Does he smile that

[1] "Now it happed to the country he went for a blessing
And from his State Daddy to get a new lesson.
He went to Daddy Jenky by trimmer Hal attended,
In such company, good lack, how his morals must be mended."

Cf. Prior's "Life of Burke," p. 444. "Jenky," of course, is Jenkinson, and "Hal," Dundas.

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they should be thought sincere?" Lord John Townshend—"Jack Idleton," as Mrs. Sheridan termed him—owned that he "was the readiest man possible," yet Townshend both here and otherwise promulgated the most contrary statements and swelled the glib legends of Holland House. Windham, too, attests his "fertility and quickness" in a sentence ascribing his love of preparation to "an over-desire for polish and correctness." Sheridan's impromptus were legion, and it does not need the witness of Townshend or Windham to refute Moore's superficial strictures about "slowness." The vivid letters scrawled off in a few minutes from the House of Commons to Lady Bessborough betoken the quickness of his brain.[1] Even his set passages were usually his own improvisations worked up into after-effect, while his dramatic queries on the margins of many official papers prove that his readiness was not by rote. On Abercromby's Proclamation to the Dutch, promising to restore the blessings of liberty and loyalty, he has written "Yes, you restore Nassau, but not the Cape of Good Hope!"[2] None the less some of the State speeches and flamboyant passages, where memory was the mother of invention, gave his great adversary an occasion, long, however, delayed. In January, 1805, Pitt, as first minister, thus parried the fusillade which Sheridan levelled against him, and his sarcasm shows

[1] Cf. the two given in our new series of letters to her and her sister, Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, in the Appendix to Vol. II. (4), n. (1) and (2).

[2] Sheridan MSS. (1799). For Townshend, cf. Smyth's "Memoir," p. 38; for Windham, Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 315. Fresh instances will be given in our second volume, and for the foregoing, cf. (*inter alia*) "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 274 (Forces Bill); Smyth's "Memoir," p. 31 (Warren Hastings' reply): "The servant who brought down the materials to Wanstead," Smyth tells us, "took out of the post-chaise as many bundles of papers and red boxes as would have loaded a hand-cart." The proverbial phrases occur in speeches partly of the early 'eighties, partly of the early 'nineties. Memoirs of the time ascribe "All the Talents" to Sheridan. For the phrase about the Bank in 1797, cf. also *post*, p. 91. For "peace with honour," cf. his speech on Bonaparte's overtures, June 27th, 1800. "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 380. For the second retort on Pitt, cf. "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 299.

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how hard he had been hit. Sheridan had pressed, he said, not only all that his own fancy could suggest, all that he could utter in "the ebullition of the moment," but "all that he has slept on and studied, all his hoarded repartees, the full contents of his commonplace book collected into one mass, which he kindles with a blaze of eloquence."[1] Pitt here recognises Sheridan's fusion of the two faculties. There was a grain of truth in the charge, but a grain only, for the very conditions of debate preclude any signal success without real readiness, however it may be overlaid.

With his chief plays it was otherwise. He made their toilet. He delayed and pondered over them, he touched and retouched, set and reset them again and again, so anxious was he for "polish and correctness," so certain, as he told Garrick, that what he wrote in a hurry he always felt to be not worth reading,[2] so conscious of defects, so hampered by procrastination. Sheridan was not an impetuous author. He brooded over old material, and added after-thoughts. Like Wycherley, in Congreve's eulogium,

> "He wants no judgment, and he spares no pains."

The French sentence about Buffon, "La patience cherche, le génie trouve," is his best apology. Yet even here the manuscripts of "The Critic" and of "The Duenna," as well as the facts of his dealing out an occasional piece from a box to the actors and of scribbling a song on a playbill,[3] prove that at the last moment he could extemporise brilliant passages. Such instances tend to substantiate the tales of his being decoyed

[1] Stanhope's "Pitt," Vol. IV., p. 260. One of the debates on the Additional Forces Bill. Of Pitt's own decorative notes for speeches only one specimen survives.

[2] In a letter of 1777 ("Garrick Corr." and given by Mr. Fitzgerald in his "Lives of the Sheridans," Vol. I., p. 130). The succeeding sentence is characteristic: "And what I try to take pains with I am sure never to finish."

[3] During the rehearsal of "The Glorious First of June," acted in 1794. Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 303. The song was for "Robinson Crusoe" (1781). It was called "The Midnight Watch," and Linley set it to music.

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into the green-room stocked with wine and ink, to complete the last acts of "The School for Scandal" and "The Critic." What he could dash off in haste he would elaborate at leisure, and his intermittent industry contributed to a combination not uncommon in the case of power mistrustful of its equipment.

Moore also busied himself over Sheridan's verbal appropriations, but his researches established little, while his insinuations come with less grace from one whose anacreontics sometimes recall some of the verses in "The Duenna."[1] Moore, to do him justice, laid little stress on these charges, but he does not stand alone. The "lackeys of literature"—the phrase is Sheridan's—and "the secondhand critics"—the words are Wycherley's—used to doubt whether Beaumarchais had written his own works, and they have done much the same by Sheridan. They fail to see that the stories about his driving things off to an inch are out of gear with charges not only of slowness, but of plagiarism. In no case is this a matter of real moment, for in the domain of what is loosely called "artificial" literature, not the mine but the mint is the true test of originality. In one sense only can Sheridan be termed a trespasser, and it is not the sense which the literalists have emphasised. No doubt there are phrases which, consciously or unconsciously, he assimilated; they are not many and his fame is independent of them. No doubt he imitated the types around him. No doubt by instinct and in several directions, he ranks among that race of generous borrowers which Charles Lamb so much admired. But such loans as he took were repaid with compound interest. Even

[1] Sheridan lived long enough to hear that Moore imitated his earlier lyrics, and he is reported to have answered unkind criticism by (in effect) "Don't say 'plagiarises,' say rather that two authors happen to have hit on the same words and the same ideas." We may add that the air of Moore's "Tara's Halls" tallies with Linley's setting of "Had I a heart" in "The Duenna." Cf. "The Music to the Comick Opera of 'The Duenna.'" I am inclined, however, to think that this was one of the old tunes that Linley worked up for the opera (perhaps "Banna's Banks," cf. Sheridan's letter to Linley of November, 1775, given by Moore in the "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 162). Moore, praising these very lines as "models," speaks of "the matchless air to which they are adapted." Cf. *ibid.*, p. 174.

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before his majority his school friend, Halhed, assured him that "every correction" of his "was an emendation," and "every addition a perfection."[1] He infused life into common clay and created an atmosphere for it to breathe in. Such vitality is the sign-manual of adaptive genius, for it is the *ensemble* that matters, not the mechanism of its parts, and in no branch of art is a copy ever a living thing.

Sheridan belongs by birthright to the lineal succession of literary borrowers in the grand style, like Racine, who pillaged from Godeau, like Molière and Beaumarchais; like Dryden and Pope, who billeted himself on "The Letters of Heloise," like Vanbrugh and Congreve; like Dumas—Alexander the Great—who frankly avowed the difference between "theft" and "conquest"; and like Mirabeau, who in the sphere of politics was called a plagiary.

All these were kings who lent an imperial lustre to the petty provinces which they annexed. Part of this aspect has been hinted by Mr. Birrell in a charming preface to a modern edition of "The School for Scandal." But Mr. Birrell had not the opportunity of ascertaining how little Sheridan took out of the wealth of material sifted or discarded before his masterpiece was done; how much, too, and how awkwardly, those pilfered from whom he was said to have purloined. This topic must be discussed in several future connections. At present it will suffice to say that no classic has escaped the charge or the transferences and coincidences that lend it colour. And if authority be wanted, we need only quote Burke's "The most celebrated borrow from each other and are content with some new turn," and Reynolds' "No artist ever achieved more than six original pictures."[2]

Mrs. Thrale had a perfect mania for pointing out to Dr. Johnson that nothing in literature was original,[3] and outside the drama the measure meted out to Sheridan would have

[1] Sheridan MSS. Halhed to Sheridan, December, 1771.

[2] "Hints for an Essay on the Drama."

[3] In one of her letters alone she finds in Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" the sources of Milton's "L'Allegro," Savage's suicide speech in

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convicted both Burke and Burns (among many others) of "plagiarism." Burke wrote his fine sentence about the chivalry through which vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness; Farquhar long before him had written "how charming would virtue look in him *whose behaviour can add a grace to the unseemliness of vice.*" Burns wrote the famous line about rank and the guinea stamp; Wycherley had written long before him, "I weigh the man, not his title; 'tis not the King's stamp can make the metal better or heavier."[1] Shakespeare is said to have taken "the cloud-capped towers" from Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling. In the same way Pope "borrowed" his Satire on Women from Fireball's speech at the opening of Farquhar's "Sir Harry Wildair," and Molière his "Tartufe," from Scarron's "Montufas." And in politics Fox actually borrowed, and without acknowledgment, his oft-repeated phrase of "Mr. Hume's euthanasia of the British Constitution" straight from an early letter addressed to him by Burke. Yet that does not make his use of it less original. Quidnuncs have pounced on words, names and situations that were theatrical stock-in-trade; volumes which Sheridan never read have been ransacked to prove him a cuckoo, and the readiest of men has been twitted with being a retailer of *réchauffés*. Envy was busy in this direction while Sheridan was alive, and a whole chorus joined in what Mrs. Thrale said of him in another connection, "He is growing fat like Heliogabalus on the tongues of nightingales."[2] The reproach stuck, and the research to justify it lasted. Over-zeal, indeed, once went so far as to impute theft, in the case of a verse which in fact Sheridan filched from himself;[3] and some would still have us

"The Wanderer," a story by Swift, and a passage in Shakespeare. Cf. "Piozzi Letters," Vol. II., p. 247.

[1] Cf. for the first, "Love in a Bottle," Act I., Sc. I.; for the second, "The Plain Dealer," Act I., Sc. I. Compare also his "And with faint praises one another damn" ("Plain Dealer," Prologue) with Pope's "damn with faint praise."

[2] Madame d'Arblay's "Diary," Vol. I., p. 405.

[3] The verse came from a song in "The Stranger," and was taken from

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believe that a style of recognisable *finesse*[1] was a copy, that a lifetime of many-sided excellence was "one long appropriation clause"; that, in fine, he was a mere *cento* of ingenious extracts. There was assuredly no lack in these matters of what Sheridan called "disinterested curiosity." Meanwhile, he was content to forearm himself by disclaimer in his preface to "The Rivals," and to ridicule his impugners more than six years afterwards in "The Critic." Sub-consciousness plays a large part in "plagiarism." "Faded ideas," he observes in that preface, with a truth repeated afterwards by his friend Burgoyne and in our own days by "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table,"[2] "faded ideas float in the fancy like half-forgotten dreams, and the imagination in its fullest enjoyments becomes suspicious of its offspring and doubts whether it has created or adopted." Everyone recollects Sir Fretful's "commonplace book with its stray jokes and pilfered witticisms, kept with as much method as the ledger of the lost-and-stolen office"; while Puff's excuse for his own repetition of Othello is undying: "all that can be said is that two people happened to hit on the same thought—and Shakespeare made use of it first—that's all." Nor did Sheridan neglect this theme in the most polished verses that he ever wrote—"The Portrait" which he presented to Mrs. Crewe with a copy of "The School for Scandal."

> "Attend, ye skilled, to coin the precious tale,
> Creating proof where innuendoes fail,
> Whose practised memories, cruelly exact,
> Omit no circumstance—except the fact."

one of his early love lyrics, the manuscript of which remains among the Sheridan MSS. For the facts, cf. Moore's "Memoirs, etc., of Sheridan," Vol. II. 276.

[1] In a letter of 1785 Mrs. Tickell says about Sheridan's corrections of Burgoyne's "Heiress," "I am sure I can see the hand of a master in several tints—eh? Is it not so?" and she speaks elsewhere of "Sheridanisms."

[2] Mr. Brander Matthews has noticed these echoes in the notes to his edition of Sheridan's two chief comedies. Burgoyne (of the American War) quotes Sheridan in his preface to "The Heiress," a comedy produced at Drury Lane in 1786. Dr. Holmes says that the presumption in such cases is that when an author has used an image to be found in his prede-

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6. Where his fine intellect chimed with a spasmodic will the effect was harmonious, but he lacked spiritual light, and his moral power often proved inadequate to direct so forcible a machine. On the three stages of parliament, theatre, and society, and in an age of their pre-eminence, he was one of the greatest performers that England has ever seen. I use the word advisedly. Sheridan's bent was an actor's, and his knowledge of the public (one essential of statesmanship) was unerring. Emotional power and fire were his in abundance. But in constructive power, in driving power—those other requisites—he was deficient. He could divine men and moments; he could hold them by his eloquence and the flight of his feelings; but he was more a manager than a leader, and an interpreter than an initiator. He may be compared to a peal of magnificent bells on which the causes of his day rang all their changes. But the chime was often jangled and out of tune, so that in the words which he pressed against Warren Hastings, he was fitful in "that wise and just policy which conducts good actions to a wise and just end."[1]

Perhaps he has suffered from an overblaze of renown. His own generation hailed him as a portent. The young Coleridge exclaimed with enthusiasm,

> "It was some spirit, Sheridan, that breathed
> O'er thy young mind such wildly various power."

Holcroft, playwright and thinker, one of the best fragmentary autobiographers that England has known, ranked him "among the first men in the nation or the world." Wraxall, no advocate for Sheridan and, in Lady Hester Stanhope's opinion at any rate, no mean observer, asserts that "on a comprehensive view he may be considered as the most highly endowed man of his time," an epitome of the talents. Pitt

cessors "he has struck upon it independently or unconsciously recalled it, supposing it his own." It is curious that Sheridan's friend, Halhed, tells him, in a letter of 1771, how astonished he was to find one of his own verses in Pope.

[1] Cf. "Speeches at the Trial of Warren Hastings" (four volumes from Gurney's shorthand reports, 1859), Vol. I., p. 693.

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owned in Tierney's presence that Sheridan was "a far greater man than Fox"; and Pitt, though privately well-disposed, was certainly not politically prepossessed in his favour. Burke (and this is forgotten), denouncing the Foxites in 1793, wrote of Sheridan that perhaps he, not Fox, "was the leader." Byron maintained that of all the orators (and he had heard Fox, Windham and Canning), Sheridan was the only one whom he wished to hear at greater length. Everyone recalls the supreme praises by Fox and Burke of Sheridan's Begum speech, but his speech on Warren Hastings's presents rivals it, and it is forgotten that his Regency oration of January, 1789, proved a fourth triumph in three successive years. "His power," commented a leading opponent, "enabled him to civilise barbarity and to symmetrise deformity." "He was a great man," owned the grudging Regent, in a passage which rings authentic both from source and style, "but in the simplicity of his heart he never knew his own greatness." Lord Brougham, again, his last and least friendly critic in Parliament, declared that "of all Fox's adherents he was certainly the most remarkable . . . the first in genius and greatest in power." And this is confirmed as the general opinion forty years earlier, both by Sheridan's sister Elizabeth, who wrote that he was "universally considered second to none but Charles Fox," and by his first wife—herself a genius—who said the same, and told him, even in 1785, that she "had such faith in his power to conquer all obstacles" that she thought "nothing impossible" for him.[1] So, too, Thomas

[1] For these several statements, cf. Coleridge's "Sonnets"; Smyth's "Memoir," p. 71, and cf. p. 72; Holcroft's "Memoir," p. 188; Wraxall's "Posthumous Memoirs," Vol. III., pp. 116, 131; Lady Hester Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. II., p. 58; Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 226, and cf. Vol. I., p. 17 (where Lord Lansdowne's surprise at being told this by Fox is amusing enough); Burke's "The Conduct of the Minority," Works, Vol. III., p. 506; Byron's "Letters and Journals" (1813), Vol. II., p. 198; Adolphus, Vol. IV., p. 340; "Sketches by Sir Jonah Barrington," Vol. I., pp. 427, 429; "Sheridan and his Times," Vol. II., p. 317 (this statement was made to the contractor Peter Moore, the last real friend left to Sheridan, after Sheridan's funeral, by the Regent, whose style is unmistakable); Brougham's "Statesmen of the Time of George III.," Vol. I.,

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Townshend, defending the first motion that Sheridan ever made in the House of Commons, said that he was equal to any task that he might choose to undertake.[1] Writing in 1788—a year indeed of "anxiety and triumph"—his wife sums up the matter to her best friend Mrs. Stratford Canning by saying, "It was a comfort to me to think that he has often surmounted difficulties by the head and the heart God has blessed him with." Time after time in his early victories—too often viewed in the light of later days—we read of the *furore* excited in all who heard him, or of him; of the almost visionary worship which he inspired as a champion of the down-trodden and a darling of the Graces. In 1787 and 1788 all Europe acclaimed him, all Ireland in 1785, and all England in 1797. The whole appanage of the theatre was his. In one of his Stafford elections no less than four hundred ladies marched in his train, headed by "a beautiful Miss Furnio." Poets hymned him, and poetesses.[2] For over thirty years the pamphlets tingled with his name. He was a spectacle to his country. His four-horsed coach had

p. 24; Sheridan and LeFanu MSS., Elizabeth Sheridan to Alicia LeFanu, 1787; Mrs. Sheridan to the same, about 1787; Mrs. Sheridan to her husband, Tuesday evening (1785?). Mrs. Tickell, writing to her sister in 1784, says: "I suppose S. has been modest. . . . Everybody says his was the next best speech to Fox's"; and in 1786, "He is worth all the Party to them almost just at this critical point." Mrs. Sheridan, writing to Sheridan's sister Alicia in 1788 of the Warren Hastings speech, says: "It is impossible, my dear woman, to convey to you the delight, the astonishment, the adoration he has excited in the breasts of every class of people. Even party prejudice has been overcome."

[1] Watkins' "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 263.

[2] One of these was a Maria Falconar; cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 146. Another was "Rosa Matilda," in "The Dream" (1805):—

> "The laughter-loving crew attend him ever,
> And when triumphant on pale Reason's throne
> The little god in merry madness reigns,
> These do their brilliant efforts all combine
> And make it victory to be overcome."

In 1781 Miss Seward sketched a prologue for Della Cruscan Pratt's "Fair Circassian," in which she lamented that Melpomene's "darling Sheridan" had "devoted himself to Thalia." Cf. Dr. Whalley's "Journal," Vol. I., p. 341. And cf. also Eg. MS. 2139, f. 141 d.

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only to clatter through Chichester and the whole town was out huzzaing.[1]

There is no need to recall Byron's tribute to the best speech, the best address, the best comedy, the best farce, and the best opera, which drew tears from Sheridan in his decay. Dr. Johnson's praise of the two best comedies of the age is equally well known, and it was accorded before "The School for Scandal" was performed.[2] Lord Holland's homage, however, to "the man whose genius has so often delighted me," is less familiar. "It was reserved," he says, "for Sheridan to be brilliant alike in the closet, the theatre and the senate," and "No Englishman," he declares, "since the time of Edmund Waller, has so indisputably attained excellence in the three branches of composition, conversation and oratory." To these appreciations it should be added that Sheridan wrote the best dedicatory poem, "The Portrait," and the best epilogue, that to "The Rivals," in our language. The epilogue to "Semiramis" was long considered as good. A pathetic passage from it was introduced with effect by Spencer Perceval into a speech of 1811, and Sheridan was touched beyond measure to hear this echo across the chasm of thirty-five years.[3]

7. But at the height of his fame and through all his phases, he himself recognised a morbidity that crossed and tormented him. "Life is no first object to me," he mused in a late and melancholy letter, "yet things that have been dearer to me I have appeared careless of and have often felt a perverse

[1] For the foregoing, cf. Minto, "Life and Letters," Vol. I., p. 364 (election of 1790 incident); Sheridan MSS. (Letters to Mrs. Canning), in which Mrs. Sheridan, besides the passage quoted, also mentions this Stafford election as a great triumph; Smyth's "Memoir," pp. 3 and 4 ("I have listened to him as to a being that belonged to another sphere").

[2] The manuscript of the play was shown to and read by Colman and others besides Garrick.

[3] Cf. "Memoir of R. Plumer Ward," Vol. I., p. 350. "Semiramis"—adapted from Voltaire by Captain Ayscough—was acted in 1776 at a benefit for decayed actors, and will be noticed hereafter. For Lord Holland's mixed criticisms on Sheridan, cf. his "Further Memoirs of the Whig Party," pp. 236—245.

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satisfaction in doing so."[1] This set him at variance alike with the cold and the headstrong, with politics and society. That siren society, at once so hard and so sentimental, proved too much for him.[2] In the rush of his career he could neither withstand nor abjure it; yet he never confused its voice with fame, while he often braved its opinion.

Self-knowledge was impossible for Sheridan. His morbidity was steeped in the sentimental strain which turned his generosity into self-sacrifice, and constantly took refuge in the emotions. Sheridan's sentimentality generalised, rarely stooping to the petty details which make up existence. The big things, he thought, cancelled the little, the capital letters obliterated the small type. "No one," he confessed to his second wife, in a long and pathetic apology, "can be of a more negligent and more procrastinating habit of mind than I am, united at the same time with a most unfortunately sanguine temper, and a rash confidence that I am capable of exertions equal to any extremity, whenever extremity may call for them. . . . I have said before that you do not know me. In truth you do not in the least. You should judge of my conduct, character and principles upon a larger scale of observation than from the failings I acknowledge."[3] "You do not know me, in truth you do not in the least." These protests haunt his life like a refrain.

This is not the falsetto of Harold Skimpole. Sheridan really felt and meant what he said, and the whole letter—twelve closely written folios of self-revelation—carries conviction of the feeling if not of the fact. It was addressed to one who, though sorely and seriously tried, often objected, like Lady Teazle, to be thwarted in "every little elegant expense." Its tenor is generous, dignified and modest. It urges no appeal to

[1] Sheridan MSS. Sheridan to his second wife, "Friday evening, 1806."

[2] In a striking letter to his second wife, below cited, Sheridan terms it, after long experience, "a deriding, malicious, and unsparing society."

[3] Sheridan to Mrs. Sheridan, "RICHMOND, April 20, 1810." His self-exculpations are always expressed with tenderness. In a slightly later letter he says, "Do I tire you, my heart? I fear I do."

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his achievements, or to the romance of their attachment. He confesses his lapses, while he makes certain that the glow of his feelings must melt a heart frozen by daily neglects. If he has wounded, it is because his hands straggled and hit without meaning to hurt. And his power of resource in the midst of disaster—the flash that plays round the ruin—is as quick and brilliant as ever.

8. His "procrastination," abetted by the "rash confidence" which he confessed, became a byword, though when he saw his way plain before him, as in his first venture with Drury Lane,[1] he could be prompt and resolute. Sheridan rose to opportunity with a will, but he often squandered it afterwards. His punctuality on the red-letter days when the mood took him, caused as much surprise as the rare legibility of his handwriting.[2] Mrs. Tickell, his first wife's fascinating sister, called him "the grand master of delays," in the same letter, where she also styled him "the great calculator," and "Sheridan's days," she added, "are generally weeks."[3] There was usually some "sitting and thinking," perhaps drinking, before the great man arrived. As Tickell wrote in his epistle from Brooks',

> Of wit, of taste, of fancy we'll debate
> If Sheridan for once be not too late;"[4]

while Joseph Surface has reminded us that "punctuality is a species of constancy, a very unfashionable quality."[5] Yet it

[1] "In all undertakings which depend principally on ourselves," he wrote to Linley in 1777, "the surest way not to fail is to determine to succeed." Sheridan MSS., and cf. Moore's "Memoirs of the Life of Sheridan," Vol. I., p. 195.

[2] A free pass to Drury Lane was once refused on the ground that it could not be genuine as the writing was so clear. His handwriting is very uneven, sometimes quite decipherable, and often a hieroglyphic.

[3] Mrs. Tickell to her sister, Mrs. Sheridan (1786). Sheridan MSS. In 1786 she writes, that her husband had "treated her to so many Sheridanisms lately that I never expect him when he promises faithfully to come."

[4] "Epistle from Charles Fox, partridge shooting, to John Townshend, cruising." The original MS. is among the Sheridan MSS.

[5] "In a lady." This is the reading in Sheridan's MS. instead of the "unfashionable in a lady of quality" that stands in the printed version.

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was admitted that his counsel was as well worth waiting for as his conversation,[1] and the charm of his presence soon appeased those who were kept waiting for it. In large affairs he was energetic, in little ones he dawdled, and in both he delayed. Fox said that he had to be dunned even for a letter, and more than once he wrote, and so did Burke, to insist that their ally should attend at the House or in the Committee Room.[2] The same Fox, at a moment of crisis, pinned up over his mantelpiece Sheridan's note of appointment for nine in the morning, when its writer turned up at two in the afternoon. Yet at that juncture Sheridan half-saved the situation by penning a document which has hitherto been attributed to Burke.[3] He did not stand alone. Fox was not immune from the foible, as he himself owned to Thomas Grenville in a letter among the Sheridan manuscripts,[4] and Fox's nephew would never do to-day what he could possibly put off till the morrow, while the second Lord Chatham, too, was as dilatory. In the rough draft for "Hernan's Miscellany," one of his earliest essays, Sheridan rails at his own weakness which was turned

[1] Boaden, in his "Life of Mrs. Siddons," has recorded that though it was a "Trojan siege" to pin Sheridan, his judgment was worth waiting for. Smyth emphatically asserts "there was no such opinion on every matter of business as his." Cf. his "Memoir," p. 66, and many other authorities might be cited. Tickell's habits resembled his brother-in-law's. "You know he is apt to do these things," writes his wife, when he shirked giving her his escort in 1786. Sheridan MSS.

[2] Holland House and Sheridan MSS., *passim*. For Fox, cf. Add. MS. 29764, f. 72. In the Sheridan MSS. Mrs. Sheridan, in more than one letter, says that his perpetual delays never allow him to catch the post.

[3] This is proved from the Duchess' MS. diary, transcribed in the Appendix to Vol. II.; and cf. *post*, Vol. II., Chapter 7.

[4] ". . . The fact is, I forgot both Tuesday and yesterday to call, though I had thoroughly resolved to do it" etc. And as regards Fox's own habits, in 1784, Mrs. Tickell tells Mrs. Sheridan that her "*friend Charles*" was equivocally engaged "the night they wanted him at a consultation of the greatest importance"; while she adds that "if it were not for S—— they would not know what to do, for he is of more consequence to them now than ever he has been." Sheridan MSS. For Fox's avowal, cf. *ibid.* in an undated letter to Grenville from Wimbledon (probably while staying at Horne Tooke's) and another on "Thursday" near five.

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against himself fully as much as against his neighbours.[1] He chides himself in his "Critic," where Puff at the end of the first act puts off his interlocutor with "for they are always late at that theatre." And this infirmity was ingeniously excused in his prologue to the delayed "Pizarro."

> "The Seasons' pleasures, too, delay their hour,
> And winter revels with protracted power;
> Then blame not, critics, if thus late we bring
> A Winter Drama—but reproach the Spring."

Halhed, his Harrow schoolmate, lectured him early on his neglect of correspondence; his first wife constantly teased him about it. He told his father-in-law, only three years after marriage, that he was "the slowest letter-writer in the world." "You write to me," was his ingenious excuse, "though you tell me you have nothing to say. I have reversed the case and have not wrote to you because I have so much to say." "Procrastination," Sheridan assured Whitbread in 1809, "is always the consequence of an indolent man's resolving to write a long, detailed letter." "His good qualities were many," wrote Michael Kelly, the singer, "and, after all, the great bane of his life was procrastination." Yet naturally enough, Sheridan could rally his friend Stratford Canning on the same foible. "What a sad correspondent you are," he told him in a letter on Irish affairs, "waiting to answer letters! Why, anyone will do that —an Irish correspondent should write all himself."[2] He would put off guests just as if they were creditors. Invitations met with the same fate, and Holland House still preserves a joint apology by himself and his son, which is too humorous to omit: "MY DEAR LORD," writes the elder in 1799, "knowing and much lamenting Tom's unpunctuality in answering letters, I cannot think of entrusting him to make my excuses." "Seeing but not believing," adds the younger, "my father's

[1] (1770) . . . "He said he would forfeit his right to the next ship (which, by the way, he had been waiting for these ten years) if ever he advanced a line."

[2] Sheridan MSS.

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unprecedented attention in reply to an invitation, I cannot think of burdening him with an excuse from me."

The unconscionable wit was certainly no respecter of persons, much as his sister-in-law used to banter him on his fondness for grandees.[1] Others than mere duns and bores were kept on tenterhooks in the castle of indolence till he emerged, smart and smiling, for his midday levée. Peers and beauties took their turn with the rest, and often walked "fifty miles on his d——d carpet."[2] His Prince had more than once to see the carriage dispatched for Sheridan, return empty to Carlton House;[3] he would be the lackey of none, and his utter indiscipline fostered his hatred of dictation. "We are all treated alike," sighed one of Sheridan's martyrs, when he saw a coroneted letter lying unopened in the heap on his table. Though it was said that he "dashed through his life,"[4] he was

[1] She often does so in her letters to her sister, where Sheridan is affectionately remembered. But towards the close of 1786 she was hurt and disappointed by his returning to his wife at Crewe Hall without finding the time (though he was then desperately busy) to pay her a visit at Hampton Court Palace. "*You*," she writes, in her sprightly vein, "have no doubt by this time been blest with the light of one of the brightest ornaments of the age, R. B. Sheridan, Esqre, an honour and pleasure for some wise purpose of Fate, I suppose, reserved for me to some future time. Indeed, I deserve my disappointment for so arrogant a presumption as that of imagining anything so insignificant as myself could attract him one day from his business and pleasures. Pray present my best respects to him and tell him that if ever accident should again bring him within twelve miles' ride of me I will not affront his dignity a second time by such impertinent hopes. . . . Time *was*, indeed, but time *is* past, a truism I feel the force of more and more every day I live." But two months later she tells her sister of Sheridan's constant attendance on their dear friend Mrs. Canning.

[2] Cf. Smyth's "Memoir," p. 53.

[3] This happened on several occasions. Writing from Deepdene in 1788, Mrs. Sheridan says that her husband "promised to pass two days with him (the Prince) at Brighton, but he was not servile," and, being prevented, "did not even send an excuse. However, the Prince was very good-natured about it."

[4] Add. MSS. 29764, f. 42, Moore to Wilkie about the "Life." For the other instances, cf. Sheridan MSS.; Moore's "Life," Vol. I., pp. 181, 195 (Drury Lane), in the Sheridan MSS.; *ibid.*, Vol. IV., p. 288; Smyth's

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ever the least hasty, the most desultory and promissory of men; addicted, moreover, to what his brother called "sleeping days," which were not the mere outcome of a vacillation shared by Coleridge, but which purposely protected him from intruders.[1] His passion for postponement grew into a system, which was not always fatal. It enabled him to find exits from blind alleys, and a breathing space for second thoughts. Certainly none could reproach Sheridan with what Madame de Staël once termed "that haste to arrive where nobody awaits you." Every day he began the world over again.

9. His carelessness, like his grandfather's,[2] was also proverbial, and few but Sheridan would have failed to contradict a statement which he had inserted in the newspapers for the express purpose of contradicting it.[3] It sprang from disorganisation,

"Memoir," pp. 43, 44, 61, etc., and a letter from the Prince of Wales to Sheridan.

[1] For Sheridan's "sleeping days," cf. Eg. MS. 1976, f. 1. Charles F. Sheridan to R. Peake, July 15, 1799: "This was one of his sleeping days. I waited half an hour after you left the house, but he was still fast asleep." Needless to say, the letter, and a succeeding one, refer to three bills which Peake, as a treasurer of the theatre, had accepted and was to negotiate at Drummond's Bank, but the rich Charles was usually Sheridan's debtor. He constantly kept his room till midday, and usually breakfasted in bed. Cf. Smyth's "Memoir," p. 42—"a fatal practice," adds the writer. Cf. also Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 355. Sheridan's habits were the same much earlier. Mrs. Tickell tells her sister, in 1784: "I took a walk to-day to Bruton Street, and found Sheridan in bed." And in 1785, on her observing that Tickell was not up till three, she adds that he "aspires to Bruton Street" (Sheridan's house).

[2] In 1725 Swift wrote to his close friend, Dr. Thomas Sheridan: "I did a Sheridanism; I told you I had lost your letter inclosed . . . and yet I have it safe here." Cf. "Swift's Works," Vol. XVII., p. 38.

[3] Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 220. The story rests on the testimony of Taylor, who told Moore that when Mathews published some slanders in *The Bath Chronicle* about Sheridan's second duel with him Sheridan asked him to see that they were repeated in London in order that he might refute them when they gained currency. He accordingly called on Woodfall, the publisher of *The Chronicle*, who complied with the request. But the refutation was never written, so that the venom was by this means spread, and Sheridan's indolence prevented him from supplying the antidote. A Bath

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not from discourtesy, and he might well have applied to his own case what his precise father quoted of himself:

> "Nor construe any further my neglects
> Than that poor Brutus with himself at war,
> Forgets the shows of love to other men."[1]

"With himself at war," this was the root of all the mischief, as we find throughout the family letters.

"There is a perverse fatality," he assured Lady Holland, "which makes me appear most negligent when I am anxious to pay the greatest attention."[2] He mislaid papers almost on purpose, and his first wife herself wrote of him, "Anything in his hands is irrecoverable," though it should not be forgotten that when times were bad no twopenny epistles ever reached what she termed the "bottomless pit of his pocket."[3] The mass of unopened plays in his library was called by Kemble a "funeral pile," but perhaps the strangest instance of his disregard was disclosed by himself in 1802, when he pleaded (and won) his own and the actors' cause against the bankers who claimed a prior lien on the Drury Lane salaries. He then owned to the Lord Chancellor that eager for retrenchment, he had pressed the Duke of Bedford

antiquary has tried to disprove this fact by finding no such statement in Woodfall's *Public Advertiser* from September, 1772, to April, 1773 (cf. Green's "Linley, Sheridan, and Mathews at Bath," p. 60); but he has mistaken the newspaper in question, and in any case Taylor's account is probably authentic even if his memory tripped as to the precise periodical.

[1] Letter from Thomas Sheridan to Sam Whyte from Edinburgh, May, 1764. Cf. Watkins, Vol. I., p. 121.

[2] Holland House MSS.; and for other excuses cf. the new series to the Duchess of Devonshire and her sister in the Appendix to Vol. II. Lady Holland complained of Sheridan's offences in this regard.

[3] Mrs. Sheridan to Alicia LeFanu (Sheridan's eldest sister), "HARROW, December 9," [1781], LeFanu MSS. She remarks that even her own letters remained there unopened in the press of business, and she says this in a letter glowing with affection. In a letter of eleven days later she adds, "He will not allow a creature to touch his papers but himself." For the other extract, cf. Tickell Corr., Sheridan MSS., and Moore's "Life," Vol. II., p. 157. For the twopenny post reason, "Creevey," Vol. I., p. 52. The twopence, of course, was due from the recipient.

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to "consolidate" the rent. Not hearing for a year, he wrote in bitter complaint of the delay. The solicitor answered that his request had been granted a twelvemonth since, and, sure enough, on a search being made, the welcome missive was reclaimed. His lawyer's bill of costs for the transfer of Drury Lane in 1776 remained unsettled till 1793. Nor did self-interest ever teach him to be careful. In 1784 even the prompt book for "The Critic" was lost at Drury Lane.[1] His great speech on Warren Hastings was left behind at Deepdene, to the Duke of Norfolk's intense amusement.[2] On one occasion he actually forgot that his banking account had been credited, and was astonished to find that a payment to him over the counter was not a loan. On another, an envelope covering ten pounds was found intact by the sender, and Sheridan's valet related to Smyth, who told it as barely credible to Moore, that he had seen his window-panes stuffed with banknotes to prevent them rattling. Mrs. Tickell recounts General Burgoyne's disappointment at missing a promised prologue to his new play in an envelope presumed to contain it; though in the same year she also relates how overjoyed her father appeared when a libretto reached him which had been given up for lost.[3] "Better," Sheridan noted in the sketch for his unfinished comedy "Affectation," "better to pay the bill than look for the receipt." "The book I forgot to lose" is a phrase which he jotted down among his first thoughts for "The School for

[1] Cf. Sheridan MSS., Mrs. Tickell's Corr. The bill for the transfer of the theatre is in the British Museum, Winton Collection, B. K. S. 3, i. 2.

[2] Cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 178.

[3] This was probably "Richard Cœur de Lion," a romantic operetta adapted from the French of Sedaine, and produced at Drury Lane in October, 1786, to rival another adaptation at Covent Garden, which it eclipsed. Sheridan seems to have supplied both songs and ideas, and Tickell, too, seems to have made suggestions. "I give it up entirely," said poor old Linley when Isaac Reid (whom Mrs. Tickell called "Skinny," and on whom Tickell played many of his jokes) "drew the precious MS. from his pocket with a letter, and my mother says it would have rewarded S. for all his pains about it to have seen the brightness of my father's countenance at that moment." Sheridan MSS.

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Scandal."[1] "I forgot to forget it" is another variation in another notebook. "He forgets to forget" he applied to an actor.

But he was strenuous in his indolence, and it was constantly in the centres of social and political energy that he dallied. "A man of deep thought," he observed in a youthful essay, "who shall accustom himself to support or attack all he has read, will soon find nothing new. The mind, like the body, must not be wasted with exercise in thought, or, like plants, be too much watered."[2] He often appeared to be frittering away his triumphs, but as often it was in appearance only. Not that these faults appeared to him as they seemed to others, or that he confessed them, as the talented Hugh Kelly did to Garrick when he bemoaned the detestable habit of sitting up late in evil company.[3] Among the Sheridan papers is a statement by Sir Richard Philipps,[4] who, fond as he was of Sheridan, objected that it would be useless writing to him, "as it was reported that he never opened or read his letters." Sheridan replied that this was "an infernal" lie; that he never "omitted to open a letter or answer one, if it merited or required an answer." "It is generally understood that you never rise till evening," was Philipps' reply to Sheridan's polite request for an early call. Thereupon Sheridan retorted with great warmth, "That, sir, is another of the lies of which I am the victim, and by which I am separated from the world and constantly thwarted. I acknowledge that I sometimes sit late, and sometimes do not get up until the afternoon; but I am apprised of calls, get up when necessary, and no person ever leaves my door whom it is of importance I should see."[5] The

[1] Sheridan MSS.; and for the previous story, cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 228, and Smyth's "Memoir."

[2] MS. "Commentary on Lord Chesterfield's Letters." Mr. Rae, in citing it, puts "wearied" for "wasted."

[3] Garrick Corr.

[4] Perhaps the Radical alderman and philanthropic sweater, who afterwards exploited George Borrow. Another Sir Richard Philipps obtained an Irish peerage (Milford) from Lord North, because the King refused his request to make a carriage road to his house across St. James's Park.

[5] Sheridan MSS.

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"when necessary" is a charming touch. All this is true enough, but everything depends on the point of view. Sheridan was able to answer what and when he chose, to dismiss whom and when he liked, but his applicants were not always of his opinion. His delays were discreet and his laziness astute; he was no vulgar sluggard. The Duchess of Devonshire tells us that he was chained to his desk a whole winter's day ferreting out legal and historical precedents for the "rights of the heir apparent."[1] Fancy the author of "The Critic" glued for hours to musty parchments and Glanville. No wonder that she exclaims "Poor Sheridan!" Industry was his stepmother, and it was said of him that he loved work because he loved lassitude.[2] Who, however, can forget that his brilliant literary career practically closed when he was twenty-eight, and that his political prominence continued for thirty-two years longer? Two separate careers of extreme distinction and manifold energy are no bad advertisement for "idleness." That idleness had to be earned, but he liked to be thought one who could dash off "The School for Scandal" at a sitting. What Fox quotes of himself may well fit Sheridan:

> "How various his employments whom the world
> Calls idle."[3]

Fox, however, alludes to his literary leisure. Sheridan pored more over men than books, and caprice entered into his work as much as into his play. His real failures arose from the multiplicity of his engagements,[4] from over-confidence, from

[1] Cf. the new MS. Diary of the Duchess in the Appendix to the second volume. Some relics of this day's drudgery remain among the Sheridan MSS., including a long passage from Hale's "Prerogativa Regis."

[2] Cf. the account of him which prefaces the edition of his plays in 1798.

[3] Cf. "Fox Corr.," Vol. III., p. 85.

[4] Among the likenesses of Sheridan to Beaumarchais' "Figaro" it is curious to note that in the original manuscript of "The Barber of Seville" this was one,—"qui se mêle de trop de choses." And Figaro's reply might have been Sheridan's: "qui s'en démêle toujours." Cf. Loménie's "Beaumarchais," Vol. I., p. 466.

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the vanity ingrained in his ambition and the necessities which alone sustained his industry; from a pride in standing unhelped on slippery places; from the nimbleness by which he rose and fell without securing a permanent foothold. Shakespeare is right:

> "So study evermore is overshot;
> While it doth study to have what it would,
> It doth forget to do the thing it should,
> And when it hath the thing it hunteth most
> 'Tis won as towns with fire; so won, so lost."

10. A fresh clue to the maze may be found in a desire to restore the fallen fortunes of his house despite the drawbacks of a neglected boyhood and a motherless youth. He was nursed in embarrassment; nor was he ever favoured by the quarrelsome father, who, in his turn, had fought manfully against his unlucky star. The gallery of ancestors in "The School for Scandal" existed among the Lares and Penates of the Sheridan household, and although Sheridan laughed at them in "The Rivals" as useless "visiting acquaintance," and in "The Duenna" derided a "family face," the laugh was assumed. The Sheridan surroundings clashed with their traditions, and the grand acquaintances, on which the gentleman-actor prided himself as much as his son, only served to heighten the conflict. As a stripling Sheridan was inured to the misery of keeping up appearances, and must have served an apprenticeship in chasing the wolf from the door during his father's quixotic quests to reform the stage, the schools, and the language. That father boasted with justice that he owed nothing through extravagance, and not a penny when he died,[1] but his energies were sapped by the liquidation of his debts. Conscious of power, young Sheridan may well have thought that there were shorter cuts to retrieval than this uphill road. He came, he saw, he conquered; but in so doing the most genial of men was constrained to shine rather than to warm.

[1] Sheridan MSS.

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11. Yet another clue, also bound up with the sentimental element, is furnished by his singular standard of honour and obligation. It sprang, as his niece tells us, from high family traditions, and is traceable to the father, who, in his "Humble Appeal to the Irish Public," declared that he had set out on the principles of independence imbibed from his great master Swift.[1] Sheridan's brother-in-law, the minor poet Tickell, rated it highly, though he had often been his debtor on acceptances forgotten or delayed. It was extravagant, like all about him, and to his own age it seemed chimerical. In later days Lord Holland disparaged its loftiness as Sheridan's pretext for not acting up to it. This, however, if seriously meant, is unfair, especially in view of the long and large indebtedness of his fellow statesmen. Lord Holland himself admitted that it was "an ideal system which he has formed of a sort of impracticable perfection in honour."[2] Its chief motives were two. The first was to preserve political independence at a time when to flout party connection was a sacrilege, while to flatter it was the mainstay of the poor. Sheridan's own words in "Pizarro," "self-taught, self-raised, and self-supported," aptly describe him. From the first he protested his independence. He gave his vote, he said in 1782, as independently as any man in that House; no man should ever dictate to him.[3] He took

[1] In this "Account" (1758) he observes that "it was in his power to provide for himself much better than could the Government." Swift, he adds, taught him independence, without which there could be no liberty as "a foremost principle." Miss LeFanu, in her "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," p. 397, speaks of "a family that made its rare boast that none of its descendants of either sex had ever transgressed the laws of honour."

[2] Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 184; and for the foregoing, Sheridan MSS., R. Tickell to Sheridan (1792), "a mind so correct and manly as yours"; *ibid.*, Mrs. Tickell's Corr. about a bill for fifty pounds which Sheridan had undertaken for her husband in 1785, "transferred to Westley, the box official of Drury Lane, and then forgotten, although it had really been paid." Lord Holland's view reminds one of Burke's definition of hypocrisy which "delights in the most sublime speeches and never intending to go beyond speculation, costs nothing to keep it magnificent."

[3] Cf. "Speeches," Vol. I., p. 24 (speech on Lord J. Cavendish's motion

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his own line, often when his interest was otherwise, and his isolation increased as he grew older. He would never learn politics by rote. His private character, he once declared, was his own, but his public character belonged to the nation. In 1806 he twice proclaimed this attitude, once to the House, and again to his constituents, when he said, "Independence is in the mind of a man or it is nowhere."[1] These assertions were not vapour. He verified them in 1797, in 1803, and conspicuously in 1811, when Lord Auckland (as Eden, an old opponent) praised him for his repeated "sense of public spirit." In 1807, Wilberforce, too, owned this vein of principle in his adversary. Four years earlier Addington, who had begged him to enter his Cabinet, would gladly have conferred a peerage and a pension, but Sheridan disdained to "hide his head in a coronet." He left the premier in no doubt that he refused the slightest requital for his "unpurchaseable mind."[2] In a mercenary age he even shrank from assistance. Without stain both Pitt and Fox accepted subscriptions, and Burke, subsidies; but Sheridan actually refused a private offer of as much as three thousand pounds a year.[3] Nor was he ever a bidder in the ministerial auction-rooms; he was as unbribable as Grattan. Pitt, who spread his nets in the sight of so many birds, who

of censure on ministers, March 8, 1782, the second long speech that he made).

[1] In Parliament he said he "was sure they would not look to him for the subserviency of sacrificing his independence." If they did they would be disappointed. Cf. Hansard, July 11, 1806. The draft for the other—his Westminster hustings speech of 1806—is in the Sheridan MSS.

[2] "Life of Lord Sidmouth," Vol. II., p. 105. The "coronet" sentence comes from one of his speeches, and is also mentioned in Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 287. The statement about Sidmouth's bid for Sheridan, and Sheridan's view of the situation, from Denis O'Brien's statement in Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 91. For the previous instances, cf. "Auckland's Journals and Corr.," Vol. IV., p. 361; "Wilberforce's Corr.," Vol. II., p. 126 (August 15, 1807).

[3] Cf. Sheridan MSS. The statement of Sir R. Philipps, already cited. Moore omitted this, though it was told him. Sir R. Philipps says the annuity would have made Sheridan independent of Carlton House, though he declared that "he was in no way fettered by the Prince."

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detached not only the intriguing Eden and the astute Grenville, but Burke and Windham, the chivalrous Fitzwilliam and the opulent Portland, never caught Sheridan, who between 1790 and 1794 resisted all tentatives and approaches.[1] In 1797, when Fox sulked in his tent of secession, Sheridan again stoutly refused to reinforce Pitt, who was then trying to patch up a new ministry admitting Foxites but excluding Fox;[2] and Lord Moira, in bearing "decisive testimony" to Sheridan's firmness, says he was "ashamed" to offer it where "suspicion ought not to have been conceived." Fox's petulant surmises were indeed as unworthy as they were groundless. He had suspected him with equal injustice in 1792,[3] and yet, eleven years onwards, both Fox and Grey are to be found caballing with their ancient foes the Grenvilles, and trusting not only to Lansdowne (their old aversion) but even to Pitt, in their eagerness to upset Addington. Yet a third time, in 1801, Sheridan declined to be shaken, when he was asked by Tierney and Moira to persuade the Prince into turning Pittite. During the intrigues of 1803 and 1804, "It is no good," he told his second wife—the "Hecca" on whom he doted—"to exhort them to do right and go straightforward. My price is not on earth to do otherwise." And despite Creevey's tattle to the contrary, it was in fact through his influence at Carlton House that the Prince was then steadied.[4] And yet on this occasion once more Fox repeated

[1] In "The Struggles of Sheridan" (J. Kirby, 1791) he is thus depicted, and called "a patriot repulsing ministerial offers"; and cf. "Fox's Corr.," Vol. III., p. 258.

[2] Cf. Moore's "Memoirs, etc., of Sheridan's Life," Vol. II., p. 274. Sheridan gave as his reason that "acceptance of office would appear an acquiescence in the interdict supposed to be fixed on Mr. Fox." "I never can admit," wrote Lord Moira, "the fairness of that argument, but I gained nothing on Mr. Sheridan, to whose uprightness in that respect I can bear decisive testimony."

[3] Cf. "Fox's Corr.," Vol. III., p. 258, where he classes him, together with Grey and Lauderdale, as "manageable men" in his strictures on the patrician renegades. Grey would surely never have forgiven these doubts had he known of them later during his long and close confederacy with Fox.

[4] Sheridan MSS. (cited, but not fully explained, by Mr. Fraser Rae).

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his unfounded imputations.[1] These instances redounding to Sheridan's credit should have been unearthed long ago, but they have been overlooked. Again, after the Peace of Amiens was ratified in the spring of 1802, who so eager to visit Napoleon as Fox? Sheridan, though he had many reasons for wishing to follow the troop of fashion that repaired to Paris, abstained, on the express ground that he would "receive no civility which might interfere with his manner of speaking of Bonaparte."[2] Nor should we omit his earlier conduct during the Regency intrigues of 1788—1789, now elucidated through the Duchess of Devonshire's manuscript Diary. Against Fox's vehement wishes he is there shown to have pursued his own course in the very points which have hitherto been questioned—his reluctance to assert the Prince's *right*, or to accept high office in the intended appointments. The Duchess herself indorses the view that, throughout, honourable independence dictated his political course.[3] But any sort of political divergence, as Fox, too, discovered to his cost, was considered blasphemy by the established leaders. Politically, Sheridan has been sacrificed to Fox, whose hot-headedness injured the party that he was over-eager to advantage. Sheridan was the Whig scapegoat, and his unfailing affection for Fox should at least have saved him from disparagement. He was among the sincerest mourners at his funeral; he lost no opportunity of publishing his admiration. "Friendship," he said when Fox died, "Friendship has lost her glory, Liberty, her Apostle;" and he desired no better epitaph than "here lies the friend of Fox."[4]

They really refer to 1804. Sheridan tells his wife in the same letter that his own communications with the Prince had brought about the "confidence of certain ladies" (the Duchess of Devonshire was surely one, and perhaps Mrs. Fitzherbert the other), that the Prince would not desert their party. For Creevey's insinuations, cf. "The Creevey Papers," Vol. I., p. 26.

[1] Cf. "Fox's Corr.," Vol. III., pp. 420 and 427—432.

[2] Cf. "Windham's Diary," p. 440.

[3] Cf. *post*, pp. 100, 101, and Vol. II., Chap. 17.

[4] Sheridan MSS. A long first draft for his Westminster Election speech of 1807. These were not the expressions of a moment when they might be popular; they are matched by his uniform language throughout his life.

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Not without reason did Brougham, no friendly critic, say of him that "he made as large sacrifices as any professional man ever did in the cause of a long and hopeless opposition."[1] It was "an undaunted spirit of independence" that Sheridan pressed with pride before the Lord Chancellor in the theatrical suit of 1802. It was on his "noble spirit of independence" that his eldest sister dwelt in the last letter which he ever received from her.[2] Not long afterwards, it was as "a bold reprover of the selfish spirit of party" that the *Times* held him up to honour in a review which none the less castigates his shortcomings. Yet Leigh Hunt could find little in Sheridan's loyalty to the Prince but the adherence of a carouser to his companions. "He stuck to the last man at the table, influenced by a certain jovial disinterestedness and conventional vanity."[3] Was Leigh Hunt "jovially disinterested" when he lived on Byron and then abused him, to the rage of Moore, who equally loathed the Regent? Or when he accepted a pension from Lord John Russell, or pocketed the money which Carlyle used to put on the mantelpiece and call "Leigh Hunt's sovereign"? There is a touch of Pharisaism, surely, in these cavils. Sheridan twice[4] rejected a lucrative post for his son, though in the first case his motives were impugned, and he himself once avoided a legacy by neglecting to call on the testator. Nor can it be doubted that he was thinking of himself when he quoted Sir Guyon's reply to Mammon from Spenser's poem in Westminster Hall:

> "But I in arms and in achievement brave
> Do rather choose my flitting hours to spend
> And to be lord of them that riches have,
> Than them to have myself and be their servile slave."[5]

[1] "Statesmen of the Time of George III.," Vol. I., p. 33.

[2] Moore's "Memoir," Vol. II., p. 318. She found in it a counterpoise to his faults.

[3] Cf. Leigh Hunt's "Critical and Biographical Sketch," prefacing his edition of "Sheridan's Dramatic Works" (Moxon, 1840).

[4] For this second instance, which has escaped biographers, cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 318.

[5] Speech of May, 1794, in reply to the defence of the Begum charge.

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"This man," it has been well said of him, "never lobbied for grants in the West Indies, never tried to quarter himself on the pension list, or to cross the floor to sit with a triumphant majority."[1] Nor was his instinct for independence restricted to parliamentary life. His proud refusal to suffer his bride to sing in public earned the commendation of Dr. Johnson, and by all accounts that voice then meant an income of £3,000 a year.[2] At the same time, moreover, he declined an emolument that would have involved her appearance before the King. He could be most disinterested—indeed, this is the keynote to his public life which is his truest title to respect—and at all times he disdained to be driven. "No, Hal, were I at the *strappado*, I would do nothing by compulsion," was his Falstaffian answer to a publisher's offer of a thousand pounds for one of the speeches at the trial of Warren Hastings.[3]

It has been pointed out already that Sheridan's code of honour was twofold. Its second article was an anxiety to discharge large sums which were not even claims, to the damage of petty debts that were. It was founded partly on a grandiose liking to exceed expectation, and partly on inveterate pride. "He was a proud man, sir," the Prince Regent admitted after his death to Sheridan's last friend,

Kemble said that Sheridan was a "master" of Spenser, and could recite whole cantos of "The Faery Queen."

[1] Pearson's "Reviews and Critical Essays"; "Sheridan."

[2] In 1773 in the provinces (cf. Moore's "Life," Vol. I., p. 115); during 1774, in three places of performance in London (3,200 guineas in all). Cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 139; and for 1775, cf. *Morning Chronicle*, January 25, 1775 (£100 a night, or half profits).

[3] Cf. Barrington's "Sketches," Vol. I., p. 429. The author ascribes the refusal to indolence, and asserts that Sheridan repented of it too late; but the reason assigned elsewhere, that Sheridan feared further to exasperate Burke's jealousy, is more in keeping with his ways. He always refused to publish these speeches, though he might have made a small fortune by doing so, and though the shorthand notes existed and waited till 1859 to be printed. It may be pointed out that Macaulay, who mentions this refusal in his famous essay, assigns it to Sheridan's Begum speech in the House of Commons a year earlier. He probably follows Wraxall, who does the same.

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Peter Moore, "a proud man with certain conscientious convictions always operating against his own interests. He was a firm friend and a sound adviser, but he was so systematically jealous of his own honour, that he was always willing to grant what he was never willing to solicit in return—favours which might be interpreted as affecting his own independence."[1] At the close of his political career he welcomed a loan from that Prince which he would have spurned as a gift, though as a mere gift it has masqueraded.[2] "It has been a principle of my life persevered in through great difficulties," he wrote to his trustee, Whitbread, after the conflagration of his theatre and his hopes, "never to borrow money of a private friend—and this resolution, I would starve rather than violate, of course I except the political aid of election subscriptions."[3] It will surprise the reader to learn that Sheridan, on the eve of his second marriage, insisted on tying up the income as well as the capital of a settlement to which he contributed the lion's share, although the Dean of Winchester, his future father-in-law, remonstrated with him for so doing. This misplaced generosity resulted in a poverty-stricken deathbed while £40,000 had accumulated which Sheridan disabled himself from touching.[4] Again, in

[1] "Sheridan and his Times, by an Octogenarian" (W. Earle), a journalistic book of loose gossip, but in many particulars more accurate than has been usually supposed. The source and the style are here again vouchers for authenticity.

[2] That it was a loan is shown by Moore's MS. letters embodying his recollection of what Lord Holland distinctly told him. Sheridan MSS.; and cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. V., p. 38.

[3] Sheridan MSS. Sheridan to Whitbread (1809). This must be the source of what Creevey told Moore on Whitbread's authority, that "Sheridan was not in the habit of borrowing." Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 295. Among the Sheridan MSS. are lists of election contributions.

[4] Cf. Eg. MS. 1975, ff. 185 d. and 154. And further as regards the settlement, cf. Sheridan MSS., Sheridan to his second wife, RICHMOND, April 20, 1810: "Everything that I could realise or fairly anticipate I did with the most heartfelt satisfaction devote to you. In the course of this arrangement your father thought it too much that I should bind myself that the stock should afford me no aid or interest till it had accumulated to £40,000, as I had from the first proposed, and accordingly, before the settlements were completed, he wished to decline the condition as unreasonable, and he

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1793, when miscalculations in the plans for rebuilding Drury Lane involved it in a debt of no less than £70,000, he voluntarily assumed a large share in the liquidation of this enormous sum.[1] The first use which he made of his long-deferred accession to office in 1806 was to discharge what he considered a debt of honour to the "renters" of his theatre, though they deprecated his action and the Lord Chancellor four years earlier had positively absolved him from such a necessity.[2] The sum amounted to £5,600, and left him so crippled that he was driven to usurers for the bagatelle of £200, while he counted his "total losses from the rashness of misplaced confidence" at not less than £60,000.[3] Two years later, when he empowered three friends to examine and arrange his affairs, and himself worked night and day to redeem them, they were forced to desist simply because he obstinately declined to contest any disputed claims.[4] Such demands were often satisfied twice over and with additions of fifty per cent. for lawyers' bills.[5] In impeaching Warren Hastings he applied

wrote to me to this effect. . . . I, however, insisted on abiding by my first proposition, etc."

[1] Sheridan MSS. (statement of the affairs of the theatre).

[2] Sheridan MSS., Sheridan to the second Mrs. Sheridan, April 20, 1810: ". . . I did from a principle of honourable pride take on myself a great payment to the new renters against the advice of those who were to profit by my rashness, and although there was no claim on me for a shilling of the money, or the slightest discredit attaching to leaving the debt where the Chancellor had placed it with the consent of the renters themselves, I paid to them the sum of £5,600 from my own means and resources."

[3] From a late letter to his second wife and from "Sheridan to Sir R. Barclay, 1806," both in the Sheridan MSS. Sir R. Barclay, it may be remembered, helped also to arrange Lady Hamilton's affairs not long afterwards.

[4] Sheridan to Messrs. Hozier, Graham and Jackson, "RICHMOND, June 18, 1807," Sheridan MSS. (the portion presented to Harrow School by Mr. Wilfred Sheridan).

[5] Cf. Burgess' statement, Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 296. Burgess was a solicitor and political go-between, well acquainted with the Opposition leaders. He possessed a bagful of notes and letters, including some of Burke's. (*From private information.*)

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his own standard in demanding that all peculations should be restored. "I would search out," he insisted, "all those miserable victims of rapacity. I would humiliate the British nation at their feet in atonement."[1]

The reports of his non-payment were frequently unfounded. He often owed what he could not pay merely because he had paid what he never owed.[2] His creditors were as often debtors who exacted their pound of flesh from his delays,[3] and many who were not creditors imposed on the credulity of one who in many respects always remained a schoolboy. "I look back," he wrote when he was fifty-four, "on the facility with which I have through life been duped in many ways and by everyone, and wonder whether I ever possessed a common understanding."[4] The Prince Regent indorsed this protest in words that none will question. "He had an astounding confidence in every man," he told Peter Moore after Sheridan's funeral, "and although his pen indicated a knowledge of human nature,

[1] Cf. "Speeches in the Trial of Warren Hastings" (from the Shorthand Reports, 1859), Vol. IV., p. 151. The whole passage is very fine. Five years earlier Burke had framed a chimerical scheme of restitution.

[2] Lord Holland told Moore that he had seen a letter from Monckton, Sheridan's first parliamentary colleague, answering an appeal by declaring that so far was Sheridan from being in his debt that "if the balance was fairly struck it would prove rather to be the other way." Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 227. The actor John Palmer's allegations were unwarranted. Cf. Kelly's "Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 141.

[3] Cf. (*inter multa alia*) Eg. MS. 1975, ff. 95, 110; and for his "creditors'" indebtedness to him, cf. *ibid.*, f. 114 (a case of Trotter, who was either Fox's secretary, or more probably Dundas' underling of that name) and f. 93, where Sheridan is owed more than £3,000; there is also a letter in the Sheridan MSS. excusing himself from the prompt payment of a debt on account of being owed another as large by a peer. As early as 1778, in the disputes attending his acquisition of the Opera House, he writes to one Sleigh of its lessee, Taylor: "As for waiting for an account, does he deny that he owed me a much greater sum?" cf. *ibid.* 2137, f. 172. In Mrs. Tickell's correspondence with her sister, Mrs. Sheridan, occurs an instance of a debt that Sheridan took up for his brother-in-law—a bill drawn on Fosbrooke (the keeper of Drury Lane box-office), which, after a year's worry, proved to have been long discharged by Sheridan.

[4] Sheridan MSS. Sheridan to his second wife: "Friday evening, 1806."

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yet that knowledge was confined to his pen alone, for in all his acts he rendered himself the dupe of the fool and the designing knave."[1] Mrs. Sheridan, in an early letter from Harrow, corroborates this from her own experience.[2] Nor should Swift's character of Sheridan's grandfather be forgotten: "He was what the French call a dupe in a very high degree . . . the greatest dunce of a tradesman could impose upon him." None the less, it is generally true that dupes create their own villains, and poor Emma Hamilton's jeremiads in the same key may be remembered, and with the same spelling.[3] "Wit," Congreve wittily observes, "is always contriving its own ruin."

Was Sheridan really such a nonpareil among debtors? The wrong estimates for the first rebuilding of his theatre tied a millstone round his neck which encumbered him to the last. It was the misfortune of one thrown early on the world without capital and soon proprietor by mortgage and annuities of a prosperous concern, that his play-house became his bank. Peake, for many years its much-beset treasurer, perforce often disregarded Sheridan's orders to pay, and Sheridan cries out against the "shame and disgrace" which make him "a liar to his own servants."[4] He is buoyant in anticipation and

[1] "Sheridan and his Times," Vol. II., p. 216.

[2] LeFanu MSS. Mrs. Sheridan to Mrs. Alicia LeFanu (Sheridan's elder sister), "HARROW, Friday, December 20" [1781]: "the sale of the Opera House is likewise a very great relief to him, as it was impossible for him to attend to so many concerns without being imposed on in one or the other."

[3] Writing in 1810 to his second wife about the state of his income before his marriage, and stating that £30,000 had been raised to rebuild the theatre and to disencumber it in 1794, he says, "the detected *villiany* of two lawyers and one banker, stole £30,000 from the fund." Sheridan MSS. Sheridan writes "Villians" in some early notes for "The School for Scandal."

[4] Cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 14 (Mrs. Richardson's disappointment)—"an infamy," and *ibid.*, f. 45 (Miss Hicks' salary), and cf. ff. 57, 120, 121. Peake, himself impecunious, could not always keep pace with Sheridan's demands, and once, when an execution was impending at Polesden, Sheridan's country place after his second marriage, Sheridan writes: "I did not like to do a violent thing, otherwise I should have taken the money from the treasury"; *ibid.*, f. 82. This, perhaps, suggested the

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outrageously certain that "all will be well,"—"honour bright" —(a pet expression), while he urges what early became a motto, "*Borrow and fear not.*"[1]

So he marched forth in triumph, borrowing and to borrow. It was well written of him at the time:

> "Good at a fight, but better at a play,
> Godlike in giving, but the devil to pay."

Or perhaps, "Still paying, still to owe," as Milton wrote of "The debt immense of endless gratitude," would suit him better. Lamb certainly bore him in mind in his sketch of the ideal borrower, "The true taxer who calleth all the world up to be taxed," "whose exactions have such a cheerful, voluntary air." "What a careless, even deportment," adds the subtle humorist, "what rosy gills, what a beautiful reliance on Providence doth he manifest, taking no more thought than lilies! What contempt for money, accounting it—yours and mine especially —no better than dross" . . . "Money kept longer than three days (he thought) stinks, so he made use of it while it was fresh. A good part he drank away (for he was an excellent toss-pot), some he gave away, the rest he threw away, literally tossing it and hurling it violently from him—as boys do burrs . . . into inscrutable cavities of the earth. Or he would bury it (where he would never seek it again) by a river's side, under some bank which (he would facetiously observe) paid no interest. . . . When I think of this man, his fiery glow of heart, his swell of feeling, how magnificent, how ideal he was; how great at the midnight hour; when I compare with him the companions with whom I have associated since, I grudge the saving of a few idle ducats, and think that I am fallen into the society of lenders and little men!"[2]

It must not be supposed, however, that Sheridan was always owing. For twenty-six years his Stafford election bills were

story that he did so. Peake and he were good friends, and Sheridan stood godfather to one of his children.

[1] Cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 75.

[2] Essay on "The Two Races of Men."

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regularly paid. During the attempt to arrange his affairs in 1807, it was found that his debts did not amount to one-fifth of what he imagined, while after his death they did not exceed £5,500—no more than his father's had been in 1769, and a trifle compared with the vast sums owed and handled by his compeers.[1] It is plain that he could not have fought his way under every disadvantage, for more than forty years, without often paying it. It is equally plain that the drunken swindler and driveller of tradition could never have more than held his own with those intellectual athletes, his competitors. Yet with every allowance for misstatements, his own letters prove that he passed long intervals in weathering the storm of the great unpaid, a fact which once led him to observe of an actor's absence of mind, that it "never extended to a Saturday."[2] Actors and actresses were often indignant at the close of the week, but deserters usually returned; they persevered for years in his employ, and King, his actor-manager, who complained that he had "no free hand" even to buy a piece of "copper-lace," twice fled, and twice came back to the fold.[3] Sheridan's periodical inattention to the theatre was chiefly due to his political preoccupations, and we find Mrs. Tickell longing for his return and stalwartly defending him against the impugners of his credit.[4] Moreover, it may not be generally known that Garrick, reputed

[1] Sheridan MSS. (statement as to his affairs): "Mr. Sheridan's debts were comparatively small, it appearing by a list made up by his solicitor from claims sent to him in consequence of an advertisement in the newspapers in 1818, that the *bonâ fide* debts amounted to about £5,500." So, too, a statement by his second son, Charles Sheridan, *ibid.* For the preceding, cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 222, and a record in the Sheridan MSS. as to his election payments. For the debts of Pitt, Burke and Fox (apart from those of even more expensive friends), cf. *post*, pp. 148–153.

[2] "Bernard's Retrospections of the Stage," Vol. II., p. 177.

[3] King's letter was written in September, 1788. Cf. Boaden's "Memoirs of the Life of Kemble," Vol. I., pp. 403—407, where a citation is given.

[4] "How this distress is to end," she writes in November, 1784, "I don't know; but they expect S. every day, so I suppose he'll set them a little to rights. I hope to God he will settle his own business pleasantly." And shortly before, "I hope Dr. Ford (a mortgagee and former co-proprietor

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the most punctual of paymasters, was beset by actors clamouring for arrears.[1] And since Garrick's day, rent, competition and salaries had risen,[2] while audiences dwindled under the war of the French Revolution far more than under that with America. Where the prompt Garrick erred through caution, the reckless Sheridan erred through delay. Garrick was kind and hospitable, but he could be both jealous and stingy. His niggardliness, Quin used to relate, made him turn back on his way to a charity benefit because he had met "the ghost of a shilling."

Sheridan, however, always found the way out. There is an authentic story which illustrates how he used to pour oil on the troubled waters. Miss Farren, on the eve of her marriage with Lord Derby, got him to remonstrate with the manager. The Sheridan papers prove that as a matter of fact she had been fined for non-attendance at rehearsals, and that these fines were deducted from her salary. But Sheridan thus appeased the diminutive peer: "This is too bad. You have taken from us the brightest jewel in the world, and now you quarrel about a little dust that she leaves behind her."[3] Yet the dust was gold-dust, as the wit was well aware.

To return to Sheridan's scruples, from which we have travelled too far. They harassed each of his wives even more

of Drury Lane) will in the end do what he ought, but you know some people like to make a great fuss about doing common things."

[1] Cf. Dr. Doran's "In and About Drury Lane," Vol. II., p. 286. The newspapers of this time state that "His Majesty's servants were much distressed," their "wages miserably in arrear," and they beset Garrick for payment. In 1772 also appeared a "letter" of remonstrance with Garrick—on his "Conduct." ("London, Blaydon.")

[2] From the "Accounts" in the first Mrs. Sheridan's handwriting among the Sheridan MSS. it appears that directly Sheridan took over the theatre, in June, 1776, the pay rose even of the lampmen, and that there were old debts to pay as well as new ones incurred. She also tells us, in a letter of about 1790, that Mrs. Siddons would only act by the night and "on exorbitant terms." *Ibid.*

[3] Butler's "Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 83. Miss Farren's letter belongs to that portion of the Sheridan MSS. which was presented to the Vaughan Library at Harrow.

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than his carelessness. They starved his very horses.[1] They victimised his equally prodigal son,[2] who complained with reason that his father's desire to satisfy honour by big payments had marred his prospects in the new theatre; though he also complained, and without reason, that by dangling a theatrical monopoly before him he had barred him from a public career. They ultimately caused Sheridan's usual choice to be a choice of sufferers—one often exercised against his nearest and dearest. They led to his dread of facing a settlement because he fancied that disclosure would compromise him.[3] These surely are queer counsels of perfection. By shrinking from a revelation of debts which he feared would damage his character, Sheridan really damaged it. Yet we know from the Sheridan papers that, so far from excluding his son from politics, he actually borrowed eight thousand pounds—and he considered it degradation—to forward Tom's three candidatures for parliament. And we also know from a number of authentic sources, that not one of his intimates, however they might have suffered, ever supposed that his injuries were designed.[4] Though he

[1] Cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 63, "without a morsel"; and see Smyth's "Memoir," p. 42.

[2] In 1808 "Mr. Thomas Sheridan," while sitting with his wife in the stage box at the Haymarket, had an empty purse dropped on him. Cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 164.

[3] Cf. Eg. MS. 1976, ff. 25 (where Tom fears that Richardson's widow will receive the money) and 40 (Tom Sheridan to his uncle, C. Ward, secretary to the theatre, *circ.* 1811): "My father dares not face the compromise . . . the forbearance towards Hammersley (the banker), though in no way discreditable to him otherwise than by showing how distressed he was when he did not wish it to be thought so, etc. . . . My father's theatrical property was of his own creating, and I had no right to complain had he sold it ten times over; but he was not justified in day after day pointing to the theatre as my ultimate object and incessantly assuring me that it was to be mine . . . excluding me from all other pursuits, and then making an arrangement which is to compel my acceptance of a price tendered for a quarter, valued at a time and under circumstances the most unfortunate possible." The writer has also seen a manuscript letter from Sheridan to Mrs. Richardson in 1809, evincing a laudable desire to aid her.

[4] Cf. Taylor's "Records," Vol. II., p. 183; and, in the second volume alone, Moore's "Journal," pp. 174, 175, 298, 305, 318, 345. Most who knew

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could be terribly selfish he was not wittingly so. When it was brought home to him he hastened to atone; and where his sentiment was touched he could be unselfish also. When his need was sorest, he at least twice disobliged the Prince, once at the beck of chivalry in the case of Princess Caroline, and again at the beck of principle with regard to Ireland and the Catholic question. "His follies," to quote Sheridan's favourite Farquhar, "were weakly founded on the principle of honour, and the very foundations helped to undermine the structure."[1]

But he touched life at too many points. He could be callous as well as sensitive to the call of his honour. Early forced to put a bold front on his distresses, he outran the uncertainties of his lot and even of his hopes.[2] Absorbed by one object, he readily let slip the other. He forgot the stage in his politics, and his politics in the stage; under the pressure of needless obligations his family, too, receded into the background. Woe indeed to all whose income depended on Drury Lane! Take the case of his first wife's kindred, whose trustee and executor he became. He loved the Linleys (who could help loving

him best agree that new necessities brought new incumbrances which interfered with the settlement of old ones. Miss Ogle, his sister-in-law, told Moore that Sheridan was the best-natured man in the world, "but that when driven into a corner for his needs or swept by strong passions he would not hesitate as to means." This, however, must be taken with reserve in view of Sheridan's statement to Peake (Eg. MS. 1975, f. 82), already quoted in a footnote. For the obligation incurred on Tom's behalf cf. a letter of 1810 to the second Mrs. Sheridan, in the Sheridan MSS.

[1] Thus, "Ianthe," of "Roebuck," in "Love and a Bottle."

[2] There is a tell-tale passage in a letter among the Sheridan MSS. from his first wife to him in 1784, beseeching him to retrench in the country. "Suppose people should say that you could not live in so large a house, where would be the disgrace? . . . You cannot persuade people you are very rich if you were to spend twice as much as you do." As regards the multiplicity of his engagements, Horace Walpole writes, even in 1781, to the Countess of Ossory that "Sheridan has the opera and all the nation to regulate, and some plays to write" (cf. Corr., under date October 26). In 1788 Sheridan's first wife tells Mrs. Canning with sympathy that her Dick is "harassed by all the devildoms and the theatre"; and again in politics: "S. is harassed to death. Such wrong-heads as he has to deal with require all his abilities and all his patience to manage." Sheridan MSS.

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them?), their father always deferred to his opinion, yet soon after his second marriage their allowance was interrupted and for a time they were reduced to penury. The son, who through Sheridan had obtained an East Indian writership, was the first to acquaint him of their plight, and he must have succoured them, or they would not have remained his friends.[1] That is the amazing part of his seeming heartlessness; no one quarrelled with him for long. While the great Mr. Sheridan's curricle scoured the countryside, and he flung guineas to postboys, what recked he of poor old Martha stranded at Bognor, or of Sarah, that other maidservant, coalless and threatening notice in town?[2] No sooner shall Martha or Sarah recur to his recollection than they will be paid and with tears, at the cost, perhaps, of some other victim, who will equally turn into his devoted slave. We shall soon see to what endless trouble he would put himself for others. Richardson, who believed in his friend's goodness of nature, attributed all his errors to his moneyless beginnings. This is true; nor is it the trite plea of Becky Sharp that virtue is easy on five thousand a year. Becky was hard and grasping, Sheridan's generosity was notorious. "He has taken with him," wrote a Mrs. Parkhurst to Sheridan's sister a fortnight after his death, "a thousand charitable actions, a heart in which there was no hard part."[3] There was abundant good in the man beloved by the "divine" Miss Linley.

But he was a sanguine sentimentalist—as his wife called

[1] Cf. Add. MS. 29764, f. 7. William Linley to Sheridan, April 27, 1797. William Linley is one of those recently mentioned who absolve him from any real heartlessness. His letter is not couched in an unfriendly strain. The Indian berth was obtained from Fox; cf. "Sen. Mag.," June, 1835 ("Recollections of William Linley"). For old Linley's deference to Sheridan's opinion, cf. Mrs. Tickell's Corr., Sheridan MSS. In a letter of 1785 to Mrs. Sheridan she says, about a comedy by Cobb which Linley wished to set to music, "Pray write Sheridan's opinion, for by that I know my father will be guided."

[2] For housekeeper Martha, cf. Smyth's "Memoir," p. 49. Sarah Nicolls' much later letter is in the Sheridan MSS.

[3] LeFanu MSS., cited by Mr. Fraser Rae in his "Sheridan," Vol. II., p. 290.

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him, "a sanguine pig."[1] "Thank God that's settled," he was once reported to have said as he pushed over an "I.O.U." And these three letters were often the sum of his performance. "I return you many thanks for Fox's letter —I mean for your intention to make him write one," wrote his brother, "for as your good intentions always satisfy your conscience, you seem to think the carrying them into execution a mere trifling ceremony. . . . Your friends must always take the *will* for the *deed*."[2] On that occasion, however, he got Charles Sheridan a lucrative post, whereas Charles in the same epistle excused himself for not repaying a debt. But often and often he fancied that his promises carried instant redemption; he delayed till fresh exigencies prevented it, and his time and energies were squandered in climbing up hills down which he had needlessly fallen. Even in boyhood his debts, as he assured his father, were "contracted to get rid of former obligations"; "and," he adds characteristically, "there is no inconvenience of a debt which I have felt more than the necessity of sometimes adding to it." Twenty-four years afterwards he applied this very outlook to his criticism on the weak point in Pitt's creation of the Sinking Fund:—"If you won't lend me the money, how can I pay you?"[3] Yet how opposite are the two faces which he constantly presents, the one of a genius and gentleman, dazzling yet dignified; the other of a jaunty compounder in shady corners, shuffling the cards to admiration and cutting through the whole pack of acceptances; the one of a patriot with a purpose, the other of a vagrant spinning round on the whirligig at a country fair.

12. "No Gascon in all France"—the words may be Sheridan's[4] —could "extricate himself with a better grace" than "our

[1] Sheridan MSS. "You are such a sanguine pig" (*circ.* 1786).

[2] C. F. Sheridan to R. B. Sheridan, March 27, 1782. Sheridan MSS., and Moore, Vol. I., pp. 370—373.

[3] Cf. "Speeches," Vol. I., p. 204, May 4, 1786. For the previous matter, Sheridan MSS.: Sheridan to his father from Waltham Abbey (August 30, 1772), cited by Mr. Fraser Rae, Vol. I., p. 213.

[4] From a manuscript play, "Thelypthoros, or Wives at Will" (Add.

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incomparable friend Brinsley," as Lamb aptly termed him. This is what his own *protégé*, Canning, meant in the "Anti-Jacobin" by "Treasurer Sheridan's promise to pay," and what caused Byron to exclaim in an unpublished letter to Rogers, "With him the saying of Mirabeau that words are not things, is not to be taken literally."[1] The glamour of his persuasiveness, an orator's, was exercised quite as much over himself as over others. Opponents might have the last word, but, as he once retorted on Pitt, his was ever the last argument. Bazile's phrase about Figaro in "The Barber of Seville" is applicable to Sheridan: "Ce diable d'homme a toujours ses poches pleines d'arguments irrésistibles"; and Sheridan's pockets were often crammed with little else besides such "irresistible arguments." People believed that he would pay when he could, and they believed in his prowess as much as he did. Moreover, they knew that, despite all his makeshifts, he had real and pawnable assets. But had he been a prosaic borrower, he could never have convinced them. At root his spell was that of the skilled sentimentalist who makes others feel with and for him. He imparted the play of his own feelings. Face to face with his creditors, he was so sorry for them, so caressing and heartening, that they forgot the money, became one with the man, and fancied themselves actually his debtors, which they were—for the illusion. It was not mere legerdemain, it was known that he never intended to hurt them. But his truthfulness was emotional—a passion, not a principle. "Truth," he wrote in a youthful manuscript on Blackstone,

MSS. 23008), which contains many corrections in Sheridan's manner. The play itself, however, was by Pilon, and was acted at Covent Garden in 1781 (cf. "A New Theatrical Dictionary," p. 307). Its revival may have been intended at some later date at Drury Lane, as the corrections are said to be in Tom Sheridan's hand, which would have been impossible for some nine years later. The play itself turned on what would now be called the sex-problem, and provoked a number of rhymed replies; Madan's "Thelypthora" (1781), Cowper's "Anti-Thelypthora" in the same year; and the "Persian Tales," a squib which followed it. Madan was Cowper's cousin.

[1] From one of the Sheridan MSS. in possession of Mrs. Hall-Walker. Its date is 1813.

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"is a natural *passion*, and conscience, the fountain of all Law and Property, a covenant as God set the example."[1] "Sure I am," he protests late in life to Mrs. Sheridan the second, "that there is not a person who has been near to me and confidentially acquainted with my private affairs and personal difficulties, and who has witnessed my conduct under them, that has not been confirmed or improved in principles and integrity in his views and transactions in this life." As we read, we rub our eyes and ask, can this be Sheridan? Yet such an improver and confirmer Sheridan absolutely believed himself to be.

The effects of that persuasiveness have been described by his gifted son in a passage asserting that within its charmed circle none were masters of their judgment.[2] It was hit off by Byron in the familiar sentence, "There has been nothing like it since the days of Orpheus; he could soften the heart of an attorney."[3] This was literally true on many occasions.[4] One of the last occurred when a solicitor, clamorous for payment (and solicitors were often his money-lenders), dismissed him after a brief interview with a new loan.

> "None knew or how or why, but he entwined
> Himself perforce around the hearer's mind."

Theatrical annals, seldom authentic, bristle with accounts of his miracles. When the stage upholsterers at Birmingham laid siege to Kelly, the singer, it was Sheridan who contrived

[1] Sheridan MSS. (*circ.* 1772).

[2] "No man can listen to my father and retain a judgment of his own." Tom Sheridan to his uncle, C. Ward, Eg. MS. 1976, f. 19.

[3] "Letters and Journals," Vol. II., p. 241. Sheridan's prototype in this respect was the "silver-toned" and elegant actor, Spranger Barry, whose competition injured Sheridan's father in Dublin. "You have got your money? *No.* A part of it? Not one shilling. But Mr. Barry spoke to me so kindly, seemed so distressed to keep me waiting, . . . that he has, I know not how, got the better of my anger." Cf. "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," p. 79.

[4] Attorneys were his aversion. In one of the original MSS. for "The School for Scandal" "Snake" is styled an attorney. An attorney also appears in the prologue to "The Rivals." Mrs. Tickell, too, writing in 1785 of Wallis, solicitor to the theatre, speaks of "the cormorant attorney," and Sheridan wrote of his ill-gotten gains when he died.

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to deliver him.[1] When the Drury Lane treasury despaired of sixpence more from its bankers, Sheridan entered their sanctum and emerged radiant with three thousand pounds. He was a veritable *deus ex machinâ*. Duns quitted the Proteus, when they could catch him, with old scores unsettled on his desk, and fresh commissions on their books. And he was deliciously cool. Shaw, the band conductor, whom Sheridan had often helped, once demanded the return of five hundred pounds. Sheridan retaliated by requesting twenty-five pounds for an important errand, and met his friend's anger with "My dear fellow, hear reason. The sum you ask *me* for is a very considerable one, whereas I only ask *you* to lend me twenty-five pounds."[2] At another time as much as five thousand pounds was granted without a murmur, and his grave offer of security rejected as an insult.[3] He could achieve the impossible. When twelve thousand were demanded for the settlement on his second marriage he disappointed the sceptics, and in 1789 his first wife tells Mrs. Canning how her husband, anxious "for poor Dr. Ford's large claims on the theatre," baffled expectation by turning up with a draft for no less than eighteen thousand pounds.[4] When Mrs. Siddons stubbornly refused to appear as Lady Macbeth till the arrears of her salary were paid, and would not be moved by the Drury Lane messengers, five

[1] Kelly had been a wine merchant, like his father, who was also master of the ceremonies at Dublin. When he proposed resuming his trade Sheridan said, "Put up over your door, 'Michael Kelly, composer of wines and importer of music.'"

[2] Moore's "Journal," Vol. III., p. 128. Shaw was brother-in-law to Cobb, the dramatist (Tickell Corr.). A late letter from Sheridan on his behalf, headed "Chancery Lane," is among the Sheridan Papers. Shaw, however, seems eventually to have rued Sheridan's persuasiveness. Cf. Taylor's "Records of my Life," Vol. II., p. 176.

[3] Smyth's "Memoir," p. 63. Moore also relates this story in his "Journal." Smyth gleaned it from old Mrs. Linley, Sheridan's mother-in-law.

[4] Sheridan MSS. Another instance of a surprisingly punctual payment to the opera orchestra—as much as £500—is recorded by Kelly, Vol. II., p. 314. These memoirs, it should be stated, were put into shape by Leigh Hunt.

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minutes of Sheridan's flattery and remonstrance brought her to her senses and back to the theatre. He knew how to play on the foibles of others, and he could seldom resist a joke of this description. One of the tritest instances can scarcely be mythical, for its first narrator was an eye-witness. Kelly and Sheridan were crossing the road along the churchyard of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, which then led from King Street to Henrietta Street, when up rode Holloway the lawyer, furious at having been denied admittance. Sheridan immediately began to admire the horse, for a judgment in horse-flesh was Holloway's weakness. When the flattered attorney asked if Mrs. Sheridan would not like such a mount, Sheridan replied that he might stretch a point if Holloway would show him the animal's paces. Off trotted Holloway, as proud as a peacock, and away ambled Sheridan as pleased as Punch.[1] The records of his special pleading contained in his letters at the British Museum alone would form a practitioner's manual. Mr. Micawber could not be more hopeful. "Pray hasten the wine," he tells the down-hearted, "and add sherry to it, or we are all aground"; "£20 more, then off I come in health and spirits"; "£10 more will not break our back"; "£60, and in three months there will not exist one unsatisfied claimant"; "Fear nothing"; "Never fear"; "I reckon you will have a little wine at your Egyptian feast; your wife believes it."[2] His appeals of "money-bound" from roadside inns were answered as if by magic. He turned stony Shylocks into adherents, won over whole regiments of mortgagees, and indeed may be said to have recruited his bodyguard from rebels. But there were deserters also, the sad and ragged crew of small *employés* whose losses rose first to his mind while his theatre was burning—such as could not afford to wait, or to live on pity and promises.

Bailiffs were trespassers even on Pitt, yet we never hear stories of his adventures with them, any more than we do of

[1] Kelly's "Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 317.

[2] Cf. Eg. MS. 1976, ff. 30, 38, 40, 67, 79, 113, 175.

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the "port-wine face" which he shared with Sheridan. But Pitt was reserved and aloof. Sheridan was a figure on the boards, and his distresses were dramatised. "They tell me," says Sir Benjamin Backbite of Charles Surface, "that when he entertains his friends, he can sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities, have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antechamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair." Here Sheridan represents himself. He staged the very bailiffs as he staged his plays, and in 1792 induced them to hand the ices at a *fête* given at Isleworth to Pamela and Madame de Genlis. A few years afterwards, when he banqueted statesmen, he got the publisher Becket to stop the momentary gap in his bookshelves by lending a library. The footmen, it was said, were Becket's assistants, and the furniture came from Drury Lane. On another occasion he imitated Honeywood in Goldsmith's comedy, and even introduced the man in possession as his guest. There is a significant scrap in his handwriting referring to an early period, which shows that the law's minions were not unknown to the Drury Lane green-room. "To place Jacobs, of Drury Lane Theatre, the carpenter, in possession (runs this mandate), instead of the two strange men."[1] These two "strange men" dogged the comedian's footsteps throughout his life. But his commerce with them was not always comic. There is a pathetic and unpublished instance among the Sheridan Papers which may be disposed of here, especially as it tends to refute the insinuations as to his neglect of Shakespeare, whom he cites often both in letters and speeches, quotes in "The School for Scandal," and twice refers to in "The Critic."[2] When he saw the last of Hertford Street in the crash of 1800 and Postans, the sheriff's officer, offered him any

[1] Eg. MS. 2137, f. 174. From the preceding folios addressed to one Sleigh regarding the rearrangement of the theatre's affairs in 1778, this memorandum would seem to belong to the same date.

[2] Among his papers is also "a letter addressed to R. B. S. by a 'Citizen of the World' about Shakespeare, after visiting Dover, July 1, 1800." And a political satirist, hostile to Sheridan, calls Shakespeare his "favourite poet." Cf. "Letters to Brutus" (Edinburgh and London, 1791), p. 63.

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article for which he had "a sentiment or a necessity," "No, I thank you, my good fellow," he said; "since it's come to this, all shall go. I'll make no reserve. All my affections are blunted, and I'll take a general leave of everything." "He accordingly put on his hat and was at the door when a sudden thought struck him, and, turning to Postans, he exclaimed: 'Yes, I have recollected one thing which I do wish to retain, and if it is no breach of honour, I will avail myself of your kindness.' Postans bowed assent, and he and Sheridan re-ascended the stairs. . . . He went to the library, and, taking an old battered folio, 'This,' said he, 'is all I wish to carry away with me. . . .' Putting it under his arm, he again prepared to leave the house. Postans had thought he would have asked for valuables, and inquired the reason of this preference. 'It belonged,' said Sheridan, 'to my father, and has been the study of my life.' The bailiff's curiosity was excited, and on turning to look at the title-page, he found that Sheridan had taken away a first edition of Shakespeare."[1]

Nor were his powers of persuasion limited to the seamier side of existence. They pervade every scene of it. When he arrived too late for the funeral of his dear friend, Richardson, the agony of his grief actually prevailed on the curate to re-read the funeral service at Virginia Water.[2] So persuasive was he, that Coleridge, himself smarting under Sheridan's neglect,[3]

[1] I found this passage in a bundle of MS. Sheridaniana labelled by Mrs. Norton as papers for an intended life of her grandfather. A first folio of Shakespeare was of small value at that time.

[2] For the main particulars which the witness gives in Sheridan's honour, cf. Taylor's "Records of my Life," Vol. II., pp. 169 *et seq.* Mrs. Linley described the scene to Smyth, who details Sheridan's "tempest of grief" on this occasion; cf. "Memoir," p. 63. Mr. Fitzgerald, in his "Lives of the Sheridans," has given a turn to this narrative which I think would have surprised Taylor; and it is strange that the sympathetic biographer of Charles Townshend (at best a sort of harlequin-spangle on the robe of a "Revolution family") should be so desperately unsympathetic towards Sheridan.

[3] This episode has been hitherto ignored. Cf. "Sen. Mag." (New Series), June, 1835. "Recollections of the late William Linley, Esqre," written by an intimate friend under whose roof Coleridge and Linley were guests

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applied to him Shakespeare's epitome of persuasiveness in "A Lover's Complaint":

> "So on the tip of his subduing tongue
> All kinds of arguments and questions deep,
> All replication prompt and reason strong
> For his advantage still did wake and sleep
> To make the weeper laugh, the laugher weep.
> He had the dialect and different skill,
> Catching all passions in his craft of will.
> Thus did he in the general bosom reign
> Of young, of old, of sexes both enchanted
> To dwell with him in thoughts, or to remain
> In personal duty, following where he haunted."

13. As with his persuasiveness so with his bounty, which, even when it mulcted Peter for Paul, conciliated Peter also. Where money was concerned it sometimes resembled the bailiff's vicarious "humanity" in Goldsmith's "Good-natured Man,"—"A guinea to little Flanigan would be more to him than twice as much to another . . . now, as I can't show him any humanity, I must beg you'll do it for me." Justice certainly never kept pace with his generosity, and he makes Charles Surface recall the proverb against himself.[1] Sheridan rarely refused the many impudent applications that beset him; but he also did many kind and friendly actions to all sorts and conditions of men. He took personal pains; he applied for others; he charged himself with a nephew's education; through Fox he obtained, as we have seen, a post in India for one of his first wife's brothers, and for another a living

together in 1796. The writer had been asked by Sheridan for some new tragedian for Drury Lane. He recommended the young Coleridge, who tramped with his play "Osorio, or the Men of Arpaxaras," under the lineh in his knapsack, and arrived, dusty, at Donhead, where Coleridge wrote his lines on Linley singing. Sheridan read the beginning of the fifth act only and found the images so ludicrous that he discarded it as turgid and unfit for production. In the very year of Sheridan's death this play was produced as "Remorse."

[1] "Justice is an old hobbling beldame, and I can't get her to keep pace with generosity for the soul of me."—Act IV., Sc. II. This point is dwelt on in a sketch of his career prefacing a pamphlet of 1799.

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through Thurlow. He benefited many of his second wife's relations; he procured berths for needy friends and preferment for his old schoolmaster. He interested himself in a friendless subaltern, and besought the Prince to respite a young sheep-stealer. He lent money to his more prosperous brother before he first took office, and on the very threshold of his political life, Thomas Davies—the actor-bookseller with "a very pretty wife"—in dedicating his "Memoirs of Garrick" to Sheridan, added a striking tribute of gratitude. "Your kindness," he writes, "shown to me at a time when I most stood in need of your friendship, can never be blotted out from my remembrance. This is a subject which I could with delight enlarge upon; but I am convinced, from the constant pleasure you feel in conferring favours, you would rather do a thousand generous actions than be told of one."[1] Bunel Delille, the first French translator of "The School for Scandal," relates how, finding a mysterious manuscript of the play on his desk, he consulted its author, who, "with the generosity of Charles Surface," permitted the paraphrase, and increased the gift by subscribing for the work. He was always emptying his purse for schoolboys and servants, and his sister-in-law relates how vexed she was when he presented her parlourmaid and namesake, "Betty Linley," with a parting gift of two guineas. Unknown to Grey, who turned hostile, he set himself to procure him a peerage, and he loved him to the last.[2] His discerning eye

[1] For Davies' "Dedication," cf. the book itself and Watkins' "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 244:

". . . For on my life,
That Davies hath a very pretty wife."—CHURCHILL'S "Rosciad" (1763).

[2] For some of the foregoing, cf. Sheridan MSS., Eg. MS. 1976, ff. 56, 73, 104, 112, 118, Dr. Parr's "Life," and other old "Memoirs." In a letter of 1784 to her sister, Mrs. Tickell tells how Sheridan insisted on giving her maidservant the guinea. For Charles Sheridan's acknowledgment of the debt (and excuse for his non-payment) cf. his letter of March 27, 1782, Moore, Vol. I., pp. 370—373. This letter, as also his petition to the Prince, is among the Sheridan MSS. The nephew was Sam Tickell. With regard to Grey, Fox's advocacy in 1801 had been useless with Addington.

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was always on the alert for talent, and towards the close of his days when old Coutts died, he reminded his wife how more than thirty years earlier he had found Harriet Mellon, now the banker's widow, as a strolling child in the streets of Stafford and had brought her to Drury Lane. He went much farther than these amenities, as his youngest sister bears witness. Not only did he afford her a home when their father died, but he actually managed to settle money on her when she married, and her wedding with the younger LeFanu took place from his house. Her letters recount many instances of the thoughtful tenderness of "*notre cher frère.*" Though she was the reverse of beautiful and, as Mrs. Sheridan owned, of "rather a difficult disposition," he insisted on taking her to the *fête* of the season, where he set her down with himself at the table of honour reserved for the Prince, the Duchess of Devonshire, and their circle.[1] He would gladly, he wrote long afterwards to his "Hecca," trudge to the House of Commons "without shoe-leather," if she or hers could be advantaged, and shoe-leather at that time was sorely needed.[2]

But here again the sentimentalist comes into play. He wrapped himself up in the pleasant warmth of these recollections. "I hold my self-esteem beyond any price or purchase,"

Sheridan wrote to his second wife in that year: "I said that the only way to effect this was through the Prince, and I went immediately to him. You know that there has always been a distance, not to say dislike, between him and Grey. I never omitted an opportunity to remove this. . . . The Prince adopted the whole idea most cheerfully, and assured me he would propose it to Grey at D[evonshire] House in the evening, and afterwards make a point of it. This has been accordingly done, and I have no doubt it will succeed. He must have the exclusive right of it with Grey, who, of course, must know nothing about me in the matter." Five years later he again wrote to his wife of Grey: "Believe me that there never can be misapprehension or coldness on my part, nor, I think, on his." Sheridan MSS., cited by Rae, Vol. II., pp. 256, 228. Yet there was, though after Sheridan's exit from politics we find him dining with Grey, who was a trustee of his marriage settlement.

[1] LeFanu MSS. and Sheridan MSS.

[2] Sheridan to his second wife, "RICHMOND, April 20, 1810." Sheridan MSS.

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he proceeds in the letter just cited, "nor would I exchange the recollection of acts of kindness, gentleness and benevolence which without ostentation I have done, though accompanied with all my carelessness, for the imposing character which others may have acquired by more prudent and punctual habits than I have had the good fortune to cultivate." Like Sterne, he felt "positive that he had a soul," and he hugged this self-esteem. In 1809, when his property was in flames, "There are but three things," he moralised, "which should try a man's temper: the loss of what was the dearest object of his affections—that I have suffered; bodily pain, which, however philosophers may affect to despise it, is a serious evil—that I have suffered. But the worst of all is self-reproach—that, thank God, I have never suffered." After his first wife's death, however, he did suffer self-reproach and was comforted by Mrs. Canning.[1] But the conviction which prompted "The School for Scandal," that the warm virtues outweigh the cold, attended him throughout. There was no middle point between Charles and Joseph Surface in Sheridan's classification of character; and though the outside world complained of him bitterly, he raised an image of himself in his own breast which justified and ironised the distinction. But the same Charles Surface who ingratiates himself on the stage is not so sympathetic when we read him in the study, and Sheridan scanned closely, as it were, and at leisure, convinces us less than when we see him under the limelight.

14. We have referred to his pride, which, in his friend Taylor's opinion, exceeded his vanity.[2] But he was not too proud to be vain, and it would have tickled him to find contemporaries quite as vain but more self-complacent, covering their umbrage by casting this stone of reproach at him with the

[1] For the last two matters cf. Taylor's "Records," Vol. II., p. 183, and Smyth's "Memoir," p. 26. Taylor had the soliloquy from an ear-witness. He did not think that Sheridan felt otherwise.

[2] Taylor says this in contrasting Sheridan's vanity with Tickell's; cf. "Records of my Life," Vol. I., p. 143.

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others. Of course Sheridan was vain. How should such a man not be? The fact is that he lived on the emotion of another self which eluded him like a mirage. It is the sentimental attitude. All his leverage came from and through the feelings, and whatever lifted him above his lower levels or cheered their gloom, lent him an impression and the thrill of attainment. He needed the support of an audience and he liked to keep himself before it. He was vain of his voice, of his eyes, of the mystery of being accounted at the bottom of everything; vain even when the physicians assured him that his heart was abnormally large.[1] But his vanity was not of the cold or bare species. It was the warm, bright vanity exalted by recognition and grateful for it—the foible in small things of a nature as forgiving as it was self-conscious. There was no dearth of simplicity even in its self-consciousness. When "Pizarro" took the town and was belittled as a paraphrase, "I am but a translator," he exclaimed, "but then *what* a translator."[2]

His vanity arose from a pride which little favours soothed but great ones offended. It was not pliant, nor did he wear his heart on his sleeve; indeed, some of its manifestations were due to the bravado that meets affront with display. One of the few just things which Lord Holland wrote of him was that he resented a slight more than an injury[3]—by no means a pernicious side of this defect, for, as "Junius" wisely observes, "Injuries may be atoned for or forgiven, but insults admit of no compensation. They degrade the mind in its own esteem and force it to recover its level by revenge." Sheridan was the reverse of revengeful. Lord Melbourne, who began a manuscript "Life" of him, affirmed that vanity was his

[1] Curiously enough this was the same with his grandfather, Dr. Thomas Sheridan, Swift's friend. Cf. Scott's edition of "Swift's Works," Vol. IX., p. 112. As to his love of mystery, cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 297.

[2] "The Two Duchesses," p. 161 (Lady E. Foster to Augustus Foster, December 27, 1799). This reminds one of Matthew Arnold's "Did I say that? How good that was!"

[3] "Further Memoirs of the Whig Party," p. 72.

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reigning passion, though he completely absolved him from any trace of corruptness, and Mrs. Siddons, in a letter still extant, boasted that when she had secured her part in "Pizarro" she had extorted from Sheridan's "vanity" what she could not have hoped from his "justice."[1] But his elder sister, in her congratulations on the great prelude in the House of Commons to his Begum speech in Westminster Hall, expressed the opinion of his friends when she wrote: "I know you are much above the little vanity that seeks its gratification in the praise of the million, but you must be pleased with the applause of the discerning—with the tribute, I may say, of affection paid to the goodness of your heart. People love your character as much as your talent."[2] It was not petty conceit that Sheridan himself dreaded, nor did he make light of vanity on a big scale. "They talk," he said one day to Lord Holland, "of avarice, lust, ambition, as great passions. It is a mistake; they are little passions. Vanity is the great commanding passion of all . . . that produces the most grand and heroic deeds or impels to the most dreadful crimes. They are mere urchins, but this is a giant. Save me from this giant and I can defy the others."[3]

The dwellers in glass houses also taxed Sheridan with jealousy—even of a pretty woman, Lord John Townshend asserted. On the whole, however, the scandalous college need not be too closely credited in this particular. Tickell was jealous of Sheridan, and his jealousy in several cases has been transferred to his brother-in-law. Of Sheridan even Burke and Fox were at times jealous, and Burke was jealous of Fox's early preference for Sheridan. Jealous Sheridan certainly was of his first wife, and perhaps most so when Fox paid her undue attentions; while his son, in a burst of temper, has roundly charged him with a jealousy of his own endeavours to be

[1] Cf. an autograph letter to Mrs. Pennington of November 11, 1799, sold at Messrs. Sotheby's in May, 1905; for the previous instance, cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 206.

[2] Moore's "Life of Sheridan," Vol. I., p. 457.

[3] Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 227.

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independent.[1] Excessively jealous he cannot have been, or he would have been malicious also; but his worst enemy has not insinuated this of a man, as Moore sang of him,

> "Whose wit in the combat as gentle as bright
> Ne'er carried a heart-stain away on its blade."

None the less, the self-torment of jealousy was a part of his being, as is shown by his personal delineation of it in "The Duenna" and "The Rivals." He has well-written in the former:

> "Ah, none but the jealous the jealous can know."

His jealousy, however, like his vanity, has been exaggerated. He took himself less seriously than did his assailants, and he

[1] Cf. Eg. MS. 1976, f. 40. Lord Holland seems to confirm this in his "Further Memoirs of the Whig Party," p. 240. Sheridan's father is said to have been jealous of him also, *ibid.*, p. 53. As to Tickell, cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 180. Wraxall says that Sheridan was jealous of Burke, but the converse is equally true; cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 304, and *ibid.*, Vol. IV., p. 225. Lord Lansdowne declares that Burke was "very jealous of Sheridan." Fox's jealousy of Sheridan in 1789 is noted in a letter cited in Lord Auckland's "Journal and Corr.," Vol. II., p. 266, and later again on p. 283. As regards the first Mrs. Sheridan, it was bruited that her husband was jealous of her talents; cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 180; and for other allegations, cf. *ibid.* p. 299, and Smyth's "Memoir," *passim*. For Fox's open flirtation, cf. *ibid.*, Vol. IV., p. 135 (T. Grenville's recollection). In the Sheridan MSS. is a letter of Mrs. Sheridan speaking of Fox's "passion" for her, which she says, in 1788, had revived. Later on it will appear that Sheridan, on a most trying occasion, spared her feelings with the utmost delicacy. As regards the literary jealousy of his wife, which was also imputed to him, we find from Mrs. Tickell's MS. correspondence with her sister, that in 1785 an operetta in which she apparently had a hand, and which was probably "The Haunted Village" (mentioned as hers in this connection in Moore's "Journal"), was not acted simply because the music was too sad. A fragment remains under the name of "Rural Amours," and a song from it is given in a subsequent chapter of this volume. Towards the close of Mrs. Sheridan's life the newspapers record several songs in a new piece as hers. Sheridan, however, seems to have objected to her public appearance as versifier, though he must have consented on more than one occasion to the appearance of her girlish verses in "The Annual Register." In 1786, however, after the Duchess of Devonshire had sent verses from Chatsworth, where the Sheridans were staying, and after Mrs. Bouverie, too, had forwarded a song—really written

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was often, to use his own phrase, "The victim of a little, well-managed misrepresentation."[1] No public man ever lived more in public or was oftener the target of home lies.[2] Nor, again, can he be viewed at full length through the tinted glasses of Holland House. "Remember," the Radical Byron warned Moore, while his biography was being rehearsed under its windows, "remember that he was a clever fellow and an Irishman, and don't believe the lies of the humbug Whigs." Vanity and jealousy were convenient whipping-posts for disappointed infallibles. Fox, in private the most generous of men, came to depreciate the ally whom he had once admired and who warmly admired him to the close. More than any other, Fox is responsible for lowering Sheridan in the eyes of posterity;[3] and this was the less justifiable because the breach was not open and because Sheridan himself requited it with unceasing attachment.

Some provocation there was, for Fox could never count upon Sheridan; and besides, Fox had regained his sobriety, while Sheridan had not. But the political pretext did Fox small honour. If Sheridan had consented to stand with a group of caballers instead of on his own feet, we should have heard

by Sheridan—for a pantomime ("The Hurly Burly"), Mrs. Tickell writes: "S—— can have no scruple about your coming in for a sprig of laurel now and then. Pray send me all you can of their muses, for they will be invaluable." Sheridan MSS., Mrs. Tickell's Corr.

[1] "The Critic," and cf. Speeches, Vol. II., p. 85 (February 17, 1792).

[2] Among hundreds three only need be now mentioned, and all from the fruitful depository of Watkins' "Life." (1) The Bristol incident of early trickery refuted by Miss LeFanu in her "Memoir" of his mother, p. 339. (2) The tissue of untruths about his treatment of his early tutor, Lewis Ker, refuted *ibid.*, pp. 340 *et seq.* (3) His alleged absence from his dying father in 1788, cf. *ibid.*, 371. Letters, too, in the Sheridan MSS. prove that he ministered to him most affectionately up to the last.

[3] Cf., *e.g.*, Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 195, where Lord Lansdowne tells Moore that his "low opinion" of Sheridan was principally formed on Fox's statements. Sheridan never ceased his extravagant attachment to Fox and his memory. In one of his later speeches he called him 'his only political friend," and his Westminster election address of 1806 is one long panegyric upon him. The draft of it survives among the Sheridan MSS. Sheridan prepared another panegyric to preface a "Life of Fox."

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far less of his delinquencies. When he dared to dissent from the oracle in 1803 and uphold the mediocre Addington's wise war preparations, Fox did not mince matters in his wrath, for at this time Fox was concerting Addington's downfall with the shifty Grenvilles. "Sheridan," he wrote, "has outdone his usual outdoings, but what degree of folly will not extreme levity and vanity be capable of producing!"[1] Vanity! Why, only five years earlier, the same Fox confessed to his nephew and confidant that "flattery, and in good doses" was "remarkably wholesome for the family constitution."[2] Sheridan's vanity consisted in not being driven, and his levity in the wit that said so. Two years later, and Fox, then bent on dethroning Pitt, actually leagued himself with that Addington whom he had pelted with abuse.[3] No sooner had Sheridan set up for himself, than Fox's nephew is also found characteristically proclaiming that the "vanity" of one whom he still humoured and exploited, of one, too, who never abated affection for him, had led him "to defy the Court and the aristocracy."[4] The "Court" was the bunch of grapes that the extreme Whigs coveted yet affected to despise, and the "aristocracy" meant their own limited selves. To defy the Whig hierarchs was then the height of political presumption. They could not tolerate the popularity of a man whom they had flattered with expectations,[5] yet whom (when we admit his faults and make every allowance for the sincerity of their annoyance) they eventually used like a

[1] "Fox's Corr.," Vol. IV., p. 11 (to Denis O'Brien, August 12, 1803). At p. 8 he calls Addington "a vile man."

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. III., p. 142.

[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV., p. 89.

[4] Cf. the passage about the events of 1806 in Lord Holland's "Memoirs of the Whig Party"; cited also in Fitzgerald's "Lives of the Sheridans," Vol. II., p. 154. About 1803 Lord Holland wrote to the effect that Sheridan's unpalatable popularity must be used by the party and that Sheridan must be humoured.

[5] In 1806, when Sheridan acceded to office without Cabinet rank, he wrote to Fox: "I tell you frankly that I take that office without the slightest feeling of obligation to anyone living. . . . It is seventeen years since, when you professed to me that I should not be content to accept that alone." Cf. his letter given by Rae, Vol. II., p. 254.

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sucked orange, only to be pitched into the gutter—the gutter that ran by Holland House. Sheridan, standing by the Prince in 1811, told his son of the transactions which incensed them, in a strain devoid either of envy or conceit. "I am doing," he said, "everything I can honourably by party, but I will not sacrifice myself or you to those who only court me or propose to deal fairly by me when they find that they want me." "On the whole," he again wrote some months later to the same correspondent, "I would not change my present political position for that of any of the mercenary and factious phalanx who fancy themselves entitled to my implicit devotion, because I think it enables me to do more real good than they *can* or *mean*."[1] Had they broken with him earlier they would have been less to blame; but in the face of this unpublished passage their charges of jealousy and vanity somewhat resemble the pruderies of Joseph Surface.

There are some curious coincidences between Sheridan's character and that of Faulkland in his mother's novel of "Sidney Biddulph" which is perhaps intended for his father. "You would imagine him," she makes Sir George comment, "so humble that he thinks everyone superior to himself" [thus Sheridan behaved in society], "yet through this disguise have I discovered a certain pride which makes him look down on all mankind." [Thus Sheridan mused in solitude.] "With a disposition framed to relish, and a heart attached to the domestic pleasures of life, he is of so enterprising a temper that danger and difficulties rather encourage than dishearten him in the pursuit of a favourite point. . . . The modesty and affability of his deportment make everybody fancy when he is in company with them that he is delighted with their conversation, yet there is a sly turn to ridicule in him which though without the least tincture of ill-nature, makes him see and represent things in a light the very opposite of that in which you fancied he saw them. With the nicest discernment when he permits his

[1] Sheridan MSS. (R. B. Sheridan to T. Sheridan, 1811 (March 7), and 1812).

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judgment to determine, let passion interfere, and a child can impose on him."

15. These contrasts pursue him everywhere, and contrast within contrast. Strength and weakness alternate, and he may be compared to Nebuchadnezzar's image, whose brightness was excellent, whose head was pure gold, but whose feet were part of iron and part of clay. Honestly disclaiming a love of luxury, at root simple in his wants, with small aptitude even for common comfort, he vied with the society in which he moved, and aired its accoutrements as a furtherance to career. He was lavish in equipages, which he liked to lend; even in early days the children's parties at his house were *fêtes;* and the festivities at the christening of his first grandson, which the Prince attended, were the sensation of the season.[1] Like Rafael in Balzac's "Peau de Chagrin," he veiled need in splendour. Physically courageous, again, he yet confessed as he grew older that he shrank from "pain or peril."[2]

While in many respects his life was one long triumph over circumstance, in others it was a frequent surrender to instinct. His temper, like his mother's,[3] was completely under his control, though it was oftener tried than that of most of his colleagues. Only once was he known to lose it, when Burke and he wrangled in a carriage after a vain attempt at reconciliation. Only once was he seen to betray his feelings in the House of Commons, and that was in 1790, when the same orator rasped him by insinuations which provoked a philippic

[1] Many accounts are given of this in the contemporary papers, cf. Eg. M.S. 1975, f. 160, and see *post*, Vol. II., ch. 11.

[2] For the above cf. Sheridan MSS., Mrs. Tickell's letters; Eg. MS. 2137, f. 162, and Sheridan MSS. Letters to his second wife, "RICHMOND, April 20, 1810," and "Friday evening, 1806."

[3] "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," p. 208. She inculcated this virtue in her children. For Sheridan's self-control in this respect, cf. Wraxall, Vol. III., p. 116, where he speaks of his "wonderful combination of almost all the talents that can meet in a man under the control of unalterable equality of temper." And cf. *ibid.*, p. 368 (referring to his "serenity"), and Vol. II., p. 86. He also dwells on his self-control in the debates on the Duke of Richmond's fortification scheme in 1785.

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against the wise denouncer of the French Revolution. Sheridan was then seen to change colour, much as Pitt did fifteen years later under his own invectives; and on his reply to the Begum charge in 1794 it was again noticed that he turned ashy pale.[1] This mastery over temper lay at the root of his tact and taste. Burke has written "The world is governed by go-betweens," and Sheridan's repeated *rôle* was that of moderator and mediator. In 1788 he tried, though in vain, to curb the headstrong counsels of Burke and Fox in the Regency *fiasco*, and of Fox once more in the case of the revolutionary societies.[2] He smoothed private differences; family troubles were referred to him, and in 1786 he seems to have been instrumental in staving off a rupture between the cold Duke of Devonshire and his impulsive, extravagant wife. Of all his party, by common consent, he owned the coolest head and the soundest judgment; yet his own whimsicality would often upset his best calculations. Without Burke's colossal learning or Fox's fluency of assimilation, he was more effective than either because he stood smiling between their precipitate extremes. His taste and tact gave him a hold of himself and others in the great assembly of the nation. He touched the commonplace with distinction and hit the House just between wind and water. To cite again Burke's character of Charles Townshend, he was in perfect unison with the temper of his hearers, whom he seemed to guide because he followed it.

Here, however, his restraint too often ended. He could control everything but his own inclinations.[3] His outward composure masked a disposition poignantly nervous, and his life was passed in rising gradations of feeling—a sort of

[1] For these two exceptions cf. "Life and Letters of the First Lord Minto," Vol. I., pp. 349—353, and Smyth's "Memoir." Lord Minto says that Sheridan was seen "to redden," thereby showing that in 1790 Sheridan's face could not have been very rubicund.

[2] In 1793.

[3] His younger son Charles, who idolised him, has recorded this in his copy of Moore's "Life."

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crescendo. He could be wild and wayward to the verge of madness. "There was no reliance on his restlessness," said his first wife, when he gave her the slip in his eagerness to escape from London after "a round of engagements and eternal business." She hunted him up and down dale till at last she found him at Tunbridge Wells in a house which he had taken for the summer without a word of warning. With difficulty she dragged him townward to settle their affairs, but he would not stay there more than one day. Then he grew normal again and returned with her quietly to Mount Ephraim.[1] This waywardness increased when his passions intervened. Just as his indifference to what he called "this vile money," could blunt his feelings for others, so his passions would sometimes belie his better nature.[2] Here Burke's appreciation of Charles Townshend once more applies to Sheridan. He praised him as "that prodigy . . . the delight and ornament of this House and the charm of every private society which he honoured with his presence"; "as one," he added, "of the most polished and pointed wit, and *where his passions were not concerned*, of a most refined, penetrating and exquisite judgment." This is Sheridan to the life, but one side of him only. Townshend owned Sheridan's nerve but not his nerves, for Sheridan, in the language of Tacitus, was as anxious as he could be warm. He fretted over shadows, while he sauntered by the substance of care. He worked himself up into feverish states. He plagued both his wives to distraction. Mrs. Canning assured Smyth—and she is an indisputable witness—that she had seen him dashing his head frantically against the wall at one end of the room while Mrs. Sheridan, as highly-strung as her husband and

[1] Sheridan MSS. Probably in 1790. We know from other sources that his friend Richardson accompanied him.

[2] Cf. the statement of his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Sheridan, in Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 318: "She spoke kindly of Sheridan and of his good nature where no object of his own interfered." It should not be forgotten, in estimating evidence like this, that both she and her husband had their own objects to pursue and were angry if they were crossed. This is evident from Tom's correspondence in the Eg. MS. And the same consideration applies to some other critics also.

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much more sensitive, repeated the operation at the other. Yet that wife's own letters prove how tenderly she loved him, despite an interval of semi-detachment; so true is Sheridan's own remark in "The Duenna" that couples must be "fond enough" to quarrel.[1] Nor, however chequered may have been his constancy, was his love less warm for her. There is a striking sentence in one of those intimate letters to the Duchess of Devonshire which find a place at the end of this work, and breathe a passionate devotion. Looking back on the scene of his elopement, and Miss Linley's terror at the sea passage, " . . . I loved her so," he writes, "that had she died, as I once thought she would . . . , I should assuredly have plunged with her body to the grave."[2] "For my part," wrote Mrs. Sheridan two years after the Whigs had been shelved, "as you know, poor Dick and I have always been struggling against the stream and shall probably continue to do so to the end of our lives, yet we would not change sentiments or sensations with Charles [his brother] for all his estates."[3]

With sublime forgetfulness Sheridan fidgeted over the health

[1] Mrs. Tickell, who peeped into one of her sister's letters in 1784, rallies her on the "my soul's own" and "my sweet heart"—"such sugar words." Two specimens may here suffice. Writing to him in 1786, and using the "little language" in which she delighted, she says: "I did not mean to lecture 'ee, my soul, in my first letter; me only vex that you should ever fret yourself or be unhappy without the shadow of a cause." A little later she writes: "Nothing to say but I love 'ee dearer than life and miss 'ee ever so bad." Sheridan MSS. She calls him "my dearest love" over and over again. In a letter (cited by Moore in his "Life," Vol. II., p. 149) she says of another lady's unhappiness: "I daresay if the truth were known he teases her to death. Your *very* good husbands generally contrive to make you sensible of their merit somehow or other." The stock passage, too, in Madame D'Arblay's diary of 1779, when Miss Burney first met the Sheridans, records: ". . . By all I could observe in the course of the evening, and we stayed very late, they are extremely happy in each other. He evidently adores her, and she as evidently idolises him. The world has by no means done him justice."

[2] Cf. Appendix to Vol. II., 4 (*g*).

[3] Mrs. Sheridan to Alicia, Sheridan's sister (1784). Sheridan MSS. Mr. Rae, in quoting this passage, omits the name of Charles. For Charles, cf. *post*, pp. 320, 321.

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or safety of all whom his own caprices had injured. When his son went skating he worried himself into such a frenzy at his belated return, that Grey laughingly advised him to order a glass case for the boy. He dreaded noises as much as Carlyle, and he hated darkness as much as Disraeli. Like the former, he executed crowing cocks; like the latter, he demanded a profusion of candles. And he was prone to presentiments and superstitions as befitted one whose family could boast a banshee. He would never travel on a Friday. When accidents happened, he had always foreseen them.[1] His gaze was constantly turned in upon his fears, yet in public, as we have seen, his insuperable calm was the wonder of beholders.

Then, again, it has been hinted how the delight and delighter of society loved the backwaters of reverie. "Reverie is loneliness," he wrote, with approval in his youthful and unpublished essay on female education;[2] "reverie is thought," in that on Lord Chesterfield's Letters; "thought is silence," in "Pizarro." But it was never long before he wearied of himself. Spectacle and excitement which goaded him into effort soon lured him back to Vanity Fair. Once in its hubbub, however, his perverseness reasserted itself, and he systematically defied the world whose favour he courted without prizing. "I have been always fond of popularity too indiscriminately, and jealous of the world's good opinion," he confessed to his imperious "Hecca," "yet I have for ever risked the former in society—I mean by negligence; nor ever pursued the latter with common prudence, *but have even felt gratified by setting it at defiance.*" A like protest figures in a first draft for "The School for Scandal," where "young Pliant" (afterwards Joseph Surface) thus criticises his brother Frank (afterwards Charles): "He has not an ill quality in his nature, yet a neglect of forms and of the

[1] For these facts, cf. Sheridan MSS., *passim*, including a late letter to his second wife about a carriage accident; Kelly's "Reminiscences," Vol. I., p. 340; Smyth's "Memoir"; Moore's "Journal"; Rogers' "Table-Talk," and Clayden's "Early Life of Samuel Rogers," *passim*; "Reminiscences of Charles Butler," Vol. II., p. 82.

[2] "The Royal Sanctuary," inscribed to Queen Charlotte.

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opinion of the world has hurt him in the estimation of his graver friends."[1] This tone grates against the known modesty of his bearing, a feature which really popularised him alike with the grave and the gay. It was no mere covering for his faults and follies, but an instinct that often raised up the enemies whom Sir Oliver in the comedy thought indispensable to a youth of merit. It was his declaration of independence both in life and politics, and the same tone pervades all his more serious compositions from the start. He was no sceptic; he believed in the dignity of man. "I intended," he told Thomas Grenville, his best friend when he was barely twenty-two, "to have made a violent reply to some passages in your last, wherein you talk most profoundly of *certain spheres in which God has placed us*. I shall one of these days learnedly confute the idea that God could ever have intended individuals to fill up any particular stations in which accidents of birth or of fortune may have flung them. The track of a comet is as regular to the eye of God as the orbit of a planet." We shall see that his politics were not picked up at haphazard as some writers have supposed; they accorded with this instinct. In several of his earliest manuscripts we find an assurance that native distinction is the true basis of aristocracy, and that the meaning of our Revolution was the transference of power to the people. "This is the most slavish doctrine that ever was inculcated," is his projected answer to Dr. Johnson's "Taxation no Tyranny," which appeared before Sheridan turned twenty-four: "if by our birth we gave a tacit bond of acquiescence to that form of government under which we were born, there never would have been one alteration of the first modes of government—no Revolution in England."[2] "It had been said," he urged in 1790—and it was Chatham that he quoted—"It had been said, *non Cæsar pulsante manu*. The winds of heaven and the elements may enter the cottage of the peasant, but

[1] Sheridan MSS.

[2] Sheridan MSS. (1775). This is cited by Moore. The previous passage comes from a letter to Grenville of 1773, cited by Mr. Fraser Rae. The remaining instances are new.

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not the king without the peasant's permission."[1] The same point of view distinguishes his manuscript notes for an unfinished reply to Burke's "Appeal from the New Whigs to the Old"; it appears in his address to the Surrey Volunteers in 1803, where he urges "There is no distinction of classes here, nor is any man placed in a post to which his prospects and those of his posterity are limited to the exclusion of hope and ambition";[2] and it colours even his share in the early burlesque of "Ixion." A servant thus defends the dignity of servitude to his fellow-flunkey:

> "O John, we must not be so fine in censure
> Nor hazard doubts and maxims at a venture,
> For each no doubt is marked from his creation
> By Nature, to fill up a certain station;
> And when he's fixed, he never can get off it,
> No more than glass or tumbler from my buffet."

To which the other rejoins, "*You* must clean knives while *I* go lay the cloth."[3] And this was his attitude at a period when "Quality" deemed itself privileged even in vice; when the haughty Duchess of Buckingham could rate the spiritually-proud Lady Huntingdon about the Methodists in the well-known words:—"It is monstrous to be told that you have a

[1] "Speeches," Vol. I., p. 544 (Tobacco Excise Duties).

[2] Sheridan MSS. "In worth and in rights," he says, "there is no superiority. . . . The honours and dignities of the State are not a pillar sublime to the view, but impossible to mount; they are an ascending slope beautiful in prospect, and whose summit can be reached by those who set out with industry and ability *from any part of the plain beneath*." Sheridan said the same, too, in his speech of June 18, 1804, on the Additional Forces Bill. Touching on the people as volunteers, he said: "The people of England know the value of the objects for which they have to contend. They feel from the constitution of the society in which they live that there is nothing of honour, emolument, or wealth which is not within reach of a man of merit. The landlord, the shopkeeper, the mechanic, must be sensible that he is contending not merely for what he possesses, but for everything of importance which the country contains, and I would call on the humblest peasant to put forth his endeavours in the national struggle to defend his son's title to the Great Seal of England." Cf. "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 476.

[3] Sheridan MSS. There is another MS. version in the British Museum.

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heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting."[1] Fond as Sheridan was of fine taste and fine company, conventions never appealed to him, and he sought out Rowland Hill's preaching just because his words "came red-hot from the heart."[2] At any moment he would rather do the right thing in the wrong way than the converse.

16. Apart from talent, what then was the secret of his ascendancy? It was not wit alone, or art, or the unaided spell of his conversation. He grafted a power of taking pains on a natural and buoyant playfulness. Though he often played truant in the schools of society and parliament, it should be remembered that the impression left by him on the rank and file at the dawn of his career was that of solidity as well as of sprightliness. "A leading man, ma'am, solid, quick, lively; nobody like him—a *leading* man," was the verdict of "Mr. Thursby," a kind of political Alfred Jingle, who called in 1785 at Delapré Abbey during one of Mrs. Sheridan's stays with the Bouveries. Earlier than this, again, Mrs. Sheridan tells her bosom friend Mrs. Canning that Sheridan is a pillar of strength to his party. Much earlier, Kitty Clive, on the eve of retirement from the stage, wrote to Garrick of Sheridan that everyone said he was "very sensible." In June, 1783, when Sheridan was Secretary to the Treasury, Lord Sheffield informed Eden (the future Lord Auckland) that "he trains on as a man of business and attention." A year earlier, when Sheridan first entered Government, he himself sportively assured his brother "how very much a man of business" he had become; while he cites Fox as a witness for the change. Lord Brougham, too, has dwelt on Sheridan's unwearied attention to parliamentary detail.[3] But he would

[1] "Life and Times of John Wesley," Vol. I., p. 27.

[2] Smith's "Book for a Rainy Day" (new edn.), p. 158, n. 1.

[3] "Statesmen of the Time of George III.," Vol. I., p. 27. For the previous instances, cf. *ibid.*, Mrs. Sheridan to her husband (1785), cited by Mr. Rae, Vol. II., p. 128; the same to Mrs. Canning (*circ.* 1784), and Sheridan to his brother Charles (April 2, 1782); 'Journal and Corr. of

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take his own time and his own way. The playing Sheridan, like the working Sheridan, was informal. He brimmed over with fun. "Oh, how I longed for Sheridan to roll with me on the carpet," writes his sister-in-law. Everyone was at ease with him. He could romp like a child, and children were his devotees.[1] In the almost daily correspondence between Mrs. Tickell and her sister, his niece, little Betty, always sends messages to her "dear friend" as she styled him, and she cries when she finds her father returned without him. When he first went electioneering, he would keep his chaise waiting while he cricketed with the boys of his colleague Monckton. He loved improvisation of every kind, from dressing an Irish stew to organising a sham fight with donkeys entrenched in ditches, and cows as the objective of a charge. "He is amazingly amusing," wrote the Duchess of Devonshire of her guest at Chatsworth; "he is going to Weirstay to shoot for a silver arrow; he is such a boy." When he insisted on quitting her, she had to detain him by main force. Together with Windham, he projected a society for the encouragement of ancient games, and he referred to it fifteen years later in a powerful speech against the degradations of bull-baiting. He delighted in violent exercise of every description—without it, he said, he could not exist—and sport was his main relaxation, though by all accounts he was an indifferent shot. He was an enthusiastic angler, an early member of the Walton Club; while almost in middle age he founded and framed a set of humorous rules for another at Leckford on the Test, which his son Tom celebrated in verse.[2] We shall see that the freaks of his practical jokes

the First Lord Auckland," Vol. I., p. 53; "Private Corr. of Garrick," Vol. I., p. 127 (cited by Mr. Rae as pp. 128, 129, Vol. I., p. 314).

[1] Cf. Miss Ogle's statement that "he delighted in children." Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 299. His friend Taylor says the same.

[2] Cf. Jesse's "An Angler's Rambles;" the rules, which are very witty, exist in MS. For the preceding, cf. Sheridan MSS. (Tickell Corr.), *passim*; Taylor's "Records," *passim*; little Betty Tickell was grandmother of Roebuck, the statesman; Moore's "Memoirs, etc., of Sheridan," Vol. II., p. 276. The sham fight was on Marsden Moor, and Sheridan sent "Captain Creevey" to charge the cows: Devonshire House MSS.; Georgiana, Duchess

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in an age of them were as frolicsome as his wit. In truth much that he did was a practical jest perpetrated on himself. "Very bad joke, very bad joke indeed," as his phrase was whenever the tables were turned against him.[1]

While some of his associates murmured that his wit was not always matched by good humour,[2] he was uniformly affable and generous to the common folk, who at the last trooped weeping to his funeral.[3] He furthered the interests of Thompson, his father's retired servant, and he refused to allow his ground to be encroached upon by the proprietors of the Pantheon.[4] Old apple-women blessed him at the street corners, and the peasants at Polesden welcomed his visits. Even during his first search after a seat in parliament, Ozias Humphry, the artist, wrote

of Devonshire, to her mother, Countess Spencer, October 14, 1787 (printed also in the *Anglo-Saxon Review* for September, 1899); two dates are given for this letter, but it is clear from our next authority that not "May" is the date, but October; Windham's "Diary," p. 127. "October 16, 1787: Arrived at Felbrigg. My thoughts for part of the way were employed by drawing up a resolution for a society which Sheridan and I had projected for the encouragement of ancient games," and cf. Sheridan's "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 413 (May 24, 1802). General Burgoyne was a leading member. Sheridan in this speech, after recounting some horrible cruelties and differentiating this abuse from "genuine old English sports," denounced it as "barbarous and barbarising." The bill for its abolition was carried.

[1] Sheridan MSS. (Tickell Corr.).

[2] Cf. Bernard's "Retrospections of the Stage," Vol. II., p. 150, where a curious account is given of the "Catch Club," attended for a space both by Fox, Selwyn and Sheridan. A scale is given of "wit," "good humour," and "humour." For wit Sheridan ranks first, but he gets no marks for the other two. Selwyn gets none for humour, but a second place for the others. It should be remembered, however, that this was a casual association of many uncongenial to Sheridan, and theatrical gossip must be received with some reserve. Byron observes that in his later days he was sometimes silent and even saturnine. The Hollandites, on the other hand, twitted him with courting strangers, but he himself wrote to his wife in 1814, after a dinner with Lord Lynedoch: "I think I have lately taken a new turn among strangers, and try to be agreeable" (Sheridan MSS.).

[3] Cf. the account of the "Octogenarian," who was present. "Sheridan and his Times," Vol. II., p. 315.

[4] Cf. a *true* story in "Sheridaniana" and another in Kelly's "Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 21. This servant is mentioned by Elizabeth Sheridan in her MS. letters to Alicia. Their father used to lodge with him in town.

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that "he is beloved and almost adored by all."[1] In some jottings for one of his later speeches he dwelt on the rights of "labour," and he spoke of the "pleasures for different times of life—the smaller charities of the country—the old man mending the ways—the old woman gleaning."[2] Had this kindliness stopped at good-fellowship, or the mere moralisation in one of his late letters on a woodcutter's fate, it would perhaps have been little more than a kindly love of pleasing or the appeal of pathos and humour to a sentimentalist and a comedian. But he was serious in pressing the people's cause, and his speeches evince genuine sympathy. His line in "Pizarro"—his own, not Kotzebue's—"Content sits basking on the cheek of toil" (a line quoted with applause sixty years later by John Bright) was not bombast. He approached the whole Irish problem entirely from the cottager's standpoint. During the financial straits of 1797 he moved for an immediate supply of copper coinage to "relieve the laborious poor";[3] and if he himself impoverished many, he was none the less popular as the poor men's friend; indeed, it was this popularity that political pamphleteers abused and resented.[4] And, in contrast with Burke, who, like Cicero, inclined to belittle merchants, his popularity was at its height with the retail dealers of the country. Later on, we shall find how easily this position exposed him to the gibes of pamphleteers. That publicans should have supported him can be understood, but that shopkeepers should have been his enthusiasts must be explained partly by personal fascination and partly by the rule that "the more you beat them, the better they be."

The quaint homespun of his nature endeared him to the crowd, yet on it the spangles of Harlequin were often interwoven. They belonged to his showmanship. In an address to the Surrey Volunteers, he actually transcribed a stilted

[1] Cf. Watkins, Vol. I., p. 253. He only gives the letter without naming the writer.

[2] Sheridan MSS.

[3] "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 132.

[4] Cf., *inter alia*, "The Political Dramatist" (1795) and "Letters to Brutus" (1791).

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passage from "Pizarro."[1] "My brave associates, partners of my fame," it begins, "can words add vigour to the virtuous energies which inspire your ranks," and so forth. Here sounds Old Drury with a vengeance, but the spangles of his wit did not resemble these. And though the feats of Harlequin will inspire mistrust especially on the part of clown and pantaloon, Columbine remains constant to his glitter. Sheridan enchanted the most charming women of his generation. Harlequin was only a piece of him, nor was it his deftness that most appealed to them.

17. Without question Sheridan was the best conversationalist of a day when conversation was still an art. It is too often assumed that he fascinated by artifice, by the paper flowers without sap or perfume. This is not the case. His conversation was sympathetic. More than one close observer characterised it as simple, deferent, easy, considerate and confidential —as, in fact, more irresistible by virtue of simple qualities than by its brilliance.[2] Fox, at his first meeting with him, declared that it was worth a week's waiting for, and Fox hated artifice. Here again the bores and the witlings—especially when his prime was past—lost no opportunity of taxing him with premeditation, of pointing to the cupboards where they knew that his good things were stored, and the prepared courses which they were sure led up to the dessert. In the manuscript notes for his proposed comedy on "Affectation" Sheridan has himself sketched the professed conversationalist. "A true, trained wit," he writes, "lays his plans like a general; foreseeing the circumstances of the conversation, he surveys the ground and contingencies, and detaches a question to draw you into the palpable ambuscade of his ready-made joke."[3] But Sheridan, though he sometimes used, did not need such stratagems. From boyhood upwards he was inventive, a

[1] Cf. "Pizarro," Act II., Sc. II.

[2] Cf. Taylor, "Records of my Life," Vol. I., p. 43, and the short "Life" prefixed to an edition of Sheridan's Warren Hastings speech published in the year of his death.

[3] Cited in Moore's "Life," Vol. I., p. 328.

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born humorist as well as wit, to whom every hour supplied fresh material, and to none did the hours present more variegation. His early efforts at repartee were long remembered.[1] Moore has cited a few of his impromptu verses and pasquinades, and more will be cited hereafter. An "extempore" lyric survives in a French edition of his dramatic works. Its opening may be quoted now, since it has never been reproduced:

"I gave my love a budding rose
My infant passion to disclose,
And looking on her radiant eye,
I sought to read my destiny.
She breathed upon it. It became
Mature in form, no more the same
As when with timid fears oppressed
I placed the rosebud on her breast."[2]

And there still exists, in rough writing on a scrap of paper, the satirical epitaph which he struck off during a debate of 1789 on the deaths of Speaker Cornwall and his brother-in-law, ex-Speaker Lord Grantley, neither of them noted for correctness:

"Mourn, mourn, St. Stephen's choirs, with ceaseless grieving,
Two kindred spirits from the senate fled.
In the same chair we heard them both lie living,
On the same day we see them both lie dead.
Sure in one grave they ought to lie together,
Then in their praise should fiction's self be loath;
The stone that says a civil thing of either,
May praise impartially and lie for both."[3]

[1] There are versions of these in contemporary magazines. They start with his schooldays in Dublin. A rather poor Harrow retort is to be found not only in memoirs, but in the "Life and Character" prefixed to a report of one of his Warren Hastings speeches ("Booth, London, 1816"). To the taunt of a doctor's son that he was the son of a player, he replied, "Yes, your father kills people: mine amuses and delights them."

[2] "Sheridan's Dramatic Works" (Baudry, Paris, 1828). This was doubtless one of his early "Anacreontics." The sentiment recalls the Cavalier Minstrelsy.

[3] Mr. Rae has transcribed these lines in a note. Sheridan had started with,

"One epitaph may tell the worth of either,
O'er the broad tomb one stone may lie for both,"

when he finished the verses as they stand.

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As a wit he studied his moments, as a stylist he polished his points, while the artist in him discriminated, sometimes chastened the plenty and sometimes overlaid it. But had he been a forced compiler—in his own phrase, "indebted to his memory for his jokes and to his imagination for his facts"—he could never have held a critical circle by a lifelong flow of facility.[1] Facts, it is true, were not Sheridan's strongest point, nor for that matter were they always Fox's. Sheridan was the more imaginative of the two. Fox could not bring himself at all times to honour his friend's drafts on credulity. When he asked Sheridan on one occasion to furnish him with some "facts," and the alloy was conspicuous, Fox's frank annoyance was met with the frank rejoinder, "Why, Charles, are you so d——d surly about them?" Was Charles such a Puritan in matters of precision? He himself owned to scholiast-Wakefield that his friends often ridiculed him as "a systematic defender of plagiarism," that he made his schoolboy nephew write verses in its honour, and that "the greatest poets have been the most guilty, if guilt there be in such matters." In his correspondence with Trotter and others he harps on the debt of Cervantes to Boccaccio and Heliodorus, of Racine to Greek tragedy, of Prior to Ariosto, of Fielding to Scarron.[2] The true mental pickpocket is one, surely, who thrives by thieving, but this can never be said of Sheridan, who of all his party drew least on the inexhaustible stores of Burke. Let us be just. When Charles Townshend made the celebrated speech

[1] The above phrase was used by him of Dundas in a speech of February, 1799, and the words then used were "retentive memory" and "fertile imagination"; cf. Holland House MSS. It may be interesting to recall two earlier variants of this idea to be found in the green-room, so to speak, of his notes:—"He employs his fancy in his narrative and keeps his recollections for his wit."—"When he makes his jokes you applaud the accuracy of his memory, and it is only when he states his facts that you applaud the flight of his imagination." It should be noticed that in 1791 Burke in his "Appeal from the Old to the New Whigs," spoke of "those whose wit is not so perfect as their memory."

[2] For these and the previous instances, cf. "Fox's Corr.," Vol. IV., pp. 427, 458; Vol. III., pp. 74, 145, 169.

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which Horace Walpole compared to Garrick reciting scene after scene from Congreve, *he* was never charged by the gamekeepers of wit.[1] Sheridan *was*, not because he had poached a few stray rabbits from its manor, but because he brought down such far bigger game. Tickell, in his "Wreath of Fashion," has acknowledged his brother-in-law's originality:

> "At Fashion's shrine behold a gentle bard
> Gaze on the mystic vase with fond regard.
> But see, Thalia checks the doubtful thought.
> 'Canst thou' (she cries) 'with sense and genius fraught,
> Canst thou to Fashion's tyranny submit,
> Secure in native independent wit?'"

He was no mere gymnast, and the power of his conversation was clearly something more human than belongs to mere witticism. It cannot now be measured by the enthusiasm of judges like Byron who pronounced its dying embers "superb," or by the praises even of censors like Lord Holland.[2] Conversation is evanescent as the converser's charm or the tones of an actor. Sheridan well sang of Garrick in the monody which was set to music:

> "Passion's wild breath—and frown that awes the sense,
> And every charm of gentler eloquence—
> All perishable like th' electric fire,
> But strike the frame, and as they strike expire;
> Incense too pure a bodied flame to bear,
> Its fragrance charms the sense and blends with air."

The aroma evaporates, and no memory, not even Madame D'Arblay's, can revive it.[3] She was not however the sole

[1] Two of his witticisms should be remembered: they are of the verbal school which George Selwyn followed. He said of a fat heiress that "her tonnage would soon equal her poundage." For the other, cf. *post*, p. 165.

[2] "Further Memoirs of the Whig Party," p. 244. For Byron, cf. "Letters and Journals," Vol. II., p. 240, and *post*, Vol. II., ch. 14.

[3] Cf. her "Diary," Vol. I., pp. 120 *et seq.* (1779). "He impressed her most favourably and contrary to her expectation. It was on this occasion

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chronicler of Sheridan's early conversation. We may regret that Sheridan lacks his Boswell, but none seem to have remembered that Boswell himself narrates his part in a conversation at "the club," where among others Johnson, Burke, Reynolds, and Gibbon were present. Sheridan's remarks are pithy and serious, but they give no impression of the cheery playfulness that distinguishes him. At the club he sat among the sages, and of their talk Boswell only sketches the skeleton. Burke asserted that emigration was an advantage, and this Sheridan denied. Boswell, reinforcing Burke, found an analogy for the alleged need of a bounty on the exportation of men in the actual bounty on the exportation of corn, which he went so far as to pronounce profitable to the emigrant. "But the bounty on the exportation of corn," said Sheridan, "is paid at home." "That's the same thing," rashly interposed Burke. Johnson, however, backed up his young friend with the inevitable "No, sir"; and the youth continued, "A man who stays at home gains nothing by his neighbour's emigrating." The undaunted Bozzy next argued that emigration favours population. "Yes," replied Sheridan, "if there were an emigration of children under six years of age, but they don't emigrate till they could earn their livelihood in some way at home." Sheridan then turned the conversation on oratory in parliament, as befitted a would-be statesman who was soon to sit for Stafford. After a fine compliment to Burke, he urged that no speech had ever changed a vote, and this is the more interesting as Sheridan's own rhetoric was eight years onwards to prove an exception to that rule. Burke and Johnson instanced pride and vanity as the main motives, and free discussion as the true benefit, of our system, but all this time Sheridan remained a listener. They passed to the Irish language, and still Sheridan, an Irishman, was silent. Travellers' tales and the honesty of mankind were mooted without his intervention, and, most wonderful of all, even

that she heard him say of lady versifiers that they should not write verses till they were past receiving them, and answer Mrs. Cholmondeley's request for an acrostic on her name by regretting that its length would necessitate a division into "two cantos."

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Burke's eulogy of claret evoked no response from the young author of "The School for Scandal." "Were I your dictator," observed Johnson, "you should have no wine. . . . Rome was ruined by luxury." "If you allow no wine as dictator," replied Burke, "you shall not have me for your master of horse."[1] Surely Sheridan must have smiled at the vision of Burke presiding over Dr. Johnson's *manège*.

As a performance, then, Sheridan's conversation cannot now be heard except in scattered correspondence. But it can, and should, be measured by its effects. In his youth it detained Lady Cork for two months at Chatsworth from a house awaiting her at Bath. In his age it held Rogers and Byron spellbound from six in the evening till one in the morning. It brought up Thackeray's witty and beautiful grandmother night after night to the Westminster house of her uncle Peter Moore for the mere pleasure of hearing him.[2] It disarmed his opponents, it propitiated men so opposed to each other as Dundas and Wilberforce. It softened Sheridan's breach with the fastidious Windham. It conciliated the commonplace George Rose, who once boasted that he had christened a son William in honour of Pitt and was told by Sheridan that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. For a long space (to use Burke's word) it "dulcified" Burke's righteous asperity. "You have only to wish to be excused," he assured his colleague in the Hastings trial, "to succeed in your wishes. For indeed he must be a great enemy to himself who can consent on account of a momentary ill-humour to keep himself at a distance from you." Even Lady Holland's

[1] Cf. "Boswell's Johnson," under date Friday, April 3, 1778. Sheridan was then twenty-seven. He is designated by the letter "R.," Burke by the letter "E." (Richard and Edmund).

[2] From MS. diary-information kindly offered by Mrs. H. W. Cornish, of Eton. This happened between 1812 and 1815, when Charlotte Thackeray married John Ritchie in the year before Sheridan died. Thackeray's grandfather and Peter Moore, M.P. for Coventry, married sisters, the daughters of Colonel Webb, a descendant of the general celebrated in "Esmond." Byron wrote that he and Rogers listened to Sheridan all those hours "without one yawn."

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mislike was not proof against the spell. "Whenever I see him," she sets down in her day-book, "if but for five minutes, a sort of cheerful frankness and pleasant wittiness puts to flight all the reasonable prejudices that I entertain against him."[1] In his old age, it is true, he would often sit silent, and on those nights he is twice mentioned as speechless, once for want of the bottle, and a second time because of it. But no wit was ever more cordial than his, or less cruel. It had point without sting, and it healed even where it wounded, as contemporaries acknowledged.[2] To the last, in the words of a censor, "there was no malignity, no spirit of revenge, no sentiment of hatred, nothing severe or morose, uncharitable or unkind" about him.[3] As Scott sang of Fox, he "loved to play, not wound," and Moore wrote of him after the last rites had been paid,

> "Whose humour as gay as the firefly's light
> Played around every subject and shone as it played."

Time after time, in an age of venom, he curbed the bitterness of a tongue preternaturally mordant with a deliberate "good sense and good nature" that he avowed to his second wife with pride.[4] In "The School for Scandal," also, he emphasised his

[1] For these particulars cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 335 (Lady Cork); Byron's "Letters and Journals," Vol. II., p. 320; Windham's Diary, p. 310 (May 14, 1794), at Mrs. Crewe's, Hampstead. ". . . The charm of Sheridan's conversation and the memory of past times made me regret the differences that separate us"; cf. also Sheridan MSS., cited by Moore; Lady Holland's Journal (now published), and many memoirs of the time. Sheridan's sister Elizabeth notes in one of her letters how Sheridan's cheerfulness when he was anxious dispelled the anxiety of all at his table.

[2] It was said of him that he had the faculty "of delighting and inserting the lancet at the same time." Leigh Hunt, who looked on Sheridan's whole life as a joke at others' expense, thought otherwise, but he is not borne out by the recognised facts of Sheridan's *bonhomie*, and he perhaps took the idea from Byron, who remarked that Sheridan in his latter and wretched days never laughed.

[3] Smyth's "Memoir," p. 71.

[4] "A talent for ridicule even to bitterness," he told her, "has not been wanting among such as I possess, but a certain portion of good sense and more of good nature early decided me to forego the use of it." Sheridan MSS. (1803), cited also by Mr. Fraser Rae, Vol. II., p. 224. For an amusing story of his good nature, cf. Taylor's "Records of my Life," Vol. II., p. 174.

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opinion that wit and good humour are natural allies.[1] Not one of his sarcasms ever provoked a challenge in the House of Commons, where he was always a chartered libertine; and only once outside it, if we may credit Creevey, did his tongue approximate to a breach of the peace.[2] "It is a pleasure to reflect," he wrote in some notes for a speech, "that I never have forfeited a private friendship by political prejudice."[3]

How good was his answer to Fox, entering the House just after Burke had floored one of a noble lord's nine mercenaries. "What's up?" enquired Charles of Dick as the cheers rent the air. "Nothing; only Burke knocking one of the ninepins *down*," Richard retorted.[4] How good, too, was his toast, when the Duke of York retreated before the French,—"to the general and his brave *followers*," and his answer to the friend remarking on the cold and saying "You never wear a great coat"—"I never was." How good, again, the repartee to Sheldon, a Catholic turned Protestant, who had to explain matters when Sheridan condoled with him as still excluded by an illiberal system. The encounter took place in a country house where the guests sat up till the small hours, drinking and talking. At three o'clock Sheldon drew out his watch, with "This is too much, I'm off." Sheridan, who so far had barely referred to his friend's conversion, then quietly observed, "Damn your apostate watch and put it into your Protestant fob." "A joke on your lips is no laughing matter" was his warning to Lord Lauderdale's threat of repeating a good story, and on entering a silent room where the same dull friend was

[1] There are several passages to this effect. In one of his notebooks for the play among the Sheridan MSS. he has noted of Lady Teazle that she "has wit, a great virtue," and he adds, "Tie up the knocker of her tongue."

[2] At Woburn with Adair over Fox in 1804. Whitbread patched up the quarrel; cf. Creevey, Vol. I., p. 21. This is the more remarkable as political duels were frequent. Fox's with Adam, Pitt's with Tierney, and, much later, Canning's with Castlereagh, are familiar; but even Thurlow had fought with Andrew Stuart.

[3] Cf. Sheridan MSS.

[4] This happened in 1786 on the French Commercial Treaty debate, cf. Prior's "Life of Burke," Vol. I., p. 501.

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prosing, he inferred from the silence that Lauderdale had just "committed a joke." When D'Arblay built Camilla Lacey, near Leatherhead, and "Conversation" Sharpe complained of its ugliness, "Oh, you know," said Sheridan, "we can easily get rid of that, we can pack it off out of the country under the Alien Act—the new bill for deporting immigrants." And who can forget his answer to the friend who warned him that alcohol would destroy the coat of his stomach—"Well, then, my stomach must just digest in its waistcoat." Or that other, to the long-suffering creditor who importuned him to name a day for payment: "Certainly, the Day of Judgment, but no, stay, that is a busy day—make it the day after." There are many such tales, most of them spoiled in the telling, such as his reply to the footman (who dropped the plates with a crash, but without injury), "You silly fool, all that d——d noise for nothing;" or the line improvised for a singer to introduce a song in an occasional piece, "There is my Louisa's cottage. She *must* be either in it or out of it!" But his letters display a more delicate raillery than these. In one of them to Lady Bessborough, where he wishes her "the sweet, untroubled sleep of purity," "with a hundred little cherubs fanning their white wings over you in approbation of your goodness," he proceeds "and yet, and yet, *beware!!* Milton will tell you that even in Paradise serpents found their way to the ear of slumbering innocence. Then to be sure poor Eve had no watchful guardian to pace up and down beneath her windows, or clear-sighted friend to warn her . . . and Adam, I suppose, was at Brooks's!"[1] Nor did his fine sense of humour desert him even when he lay dying. In the bare hall to which bailiffs laid siege and where duns hid in ambush, he ordered a placard to be placed with this inscription, "I know your necessities before you ask them, and your ignorance in asking."

His speeches abound in quips and sallies. Two may be recalled. His whimsical trope about the impossibility of a mass meeting of milestones, when he travestied Pitt's taxation; and another which denounced a repeal of Habeas Corpus, by

[1] Cf. App. to Vol. II., (4) *a*.

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describing the rioters as "an army of six men commanded by a tailor encamped in a back-garret, foraging in fruit-shops, parading in Piccadilly, and taking the field in Rotten Row."[1] In one of his Warren Hastings orations of 1788, he gravely touched on the discrepancies in the evidence as to the number of a Begum's children, the defendant even alleging that she had none. "And no wonder," added Sheridan, "after the events which had occurred"; "there had been a famine one year, and Colonel Hannay the next." A further speech in the same proceedings, after rallying the witness Middleton—"prevarication personified"—on his assumed forgetfulness, assured their lordships that of nothing would they ever be more oblivious than of Mr. Middleton's memory. And to Sheridan is due, as we have seen, the accepted figure of the Bank of England as an old lady. Speaking on the stoppage of its cash payments in the spring of 1797, he compared it, in a trope forestalling one of Disraeli's some fifty years afterwards, to "an elderly lady in the city, of great credit and long standing, who had lately made a *faux pas* which was not altogether inexcusable. She had unfortunately fallen into bad company, and contracted too great an intimacy and connection at the St. James' end of the town. The young gentleman, however, [Pitt] who had employed all his arts of soft persuasion to seduce this old lady, has so far shown his designs, that by timely cutting and breaking off the connection, there might be hopes of the old gentlewoman once more regaining her credit and injured reputation."[2] And his terser invective could be withering when he verified the family motto that the provoked stag becomes a lion—"*Cervus lacessitus, Leo.*" He once turned on his own party when they were faint-hearted

[1] Cf. "Public Characters," 1799—1800 (Galabin, London). In an earlier speech of 1792 he used similar language about the Dundee insurrection; cf. "Speeches," Vol. II., p. 172. He made a speciality of satirising rebellions, as the point in one of his Warren Hastings speeches, about quelling one with an affidavit, attests. The foregoing stories come from Butler, Wraxall, Rogers, Moore's Journal, the MS. Letter (cf. App. Vol. II. 4), and other sources.

[2] Cf. "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 164.

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in preparing against invasion with the phrase that they were "giving their left hand to the country." Yet none could be simpler or more precise when he chose. His "Comparative Statement" of the two India bills, hurriedly written during a debate of 1788, superseded Burke's elaborate speech of defence, and remains a monument of close comparison and plain statement.[1] His criticisms too of Pitt's financial policy are often as clear and searching, though here, in an age of non-financiers, only relative praise can be awarded.

18. Two separate shapes familiar in shadow-land may be feigned as meeting in Sheridan's composition. The first of them, the sentimental type, belongs to the fantasies of Watteau and the traditions of French spectacle. This is the wan figure of Pierrot stealing out from the warm shelter of his home into the pale moonlight of sentiment, ever straying, ever repenting, ever returning unsatisfied from his chase after Will-o'-the-wisp. He is a thing of moods, actual to himself, artificial to the onlooker. There is a roguish wistfulness about him. As he stands before his looking-glass, he readily fancies that the tears he sheds for himself are shed for others, and he is sustained by an unfailing allegiance to the morrow. His proper sphere is the fantastic wilfulness of comedy—the gay realm of the irresponsible.

So partly with Sheridan. He was *enfant prodigue*. He lived on emotion, that thin borderland between truth and illusion. He believed himself deep feeling and self-directing; it was in reality the flutter of sensations which took the shape of heart and purpose. And the glimmer of home perpetually beckoned the truant back. He came to lean on a welcome that amnestied the past, yet no sooner was it granted than he recoiled to find what havoc he had made. He was genuinely and generously sentimental. He was a typical "man of sentiment," not the man of sentiments, the traitor

[1] "Comparative Statement of the Two Bills for the better Government of the British Possessions in India, brought into Parliament by Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, with Explanatory Observations by R. B. Sheridan, Esqre. London, Printed for J. Debrett," etc. "1788."

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in a sentimental suit—"the sentimental knave," embodied in his own Joseph Surface, and far more cynically in Congreve's tragic Maskwell.[1] These deceive everyone except themselves.[2] It was himself, be it marked, that Sheridan deceived.[3] His free sentimentality was rather that of Sterne, who involved virtue—an artistic virtue—in the emotions, and caressed moral impulses without radiating moral force. Like Pierrot, too, Sheridan was all half-tones, half melancholy, half sympathy, half zeal, half warmth, half repentance, half-amendment. As the whim took him so he roved. "The tenth of July," he told Lady Holland in 1799, "was so delicious, something in the temperature so bewitching and tempting to go astray," that if he were "to sit in judgment upon a cause of gallantry, if the indictment stated it as committed on the tenth of July, he would [not] go into the evidence, but instantly bring in a 'guilty by the visitation of God.'"[4] What is all this but "the holiday barring out of the pedant reflection"?

And then let us hear him in another key, and catch his inmost voice as, agonised at his wife's impending death, he

[1] "No mask like open truth to cover lies,
As to go naked is the best disguise."
CONGREVE'S "DOUBLE-DEALER," Act V., Sc. IV.

[2] In Sheridan's original prompt-copy, corrected by himself (Sheridan MSS.), where Lady Sneerwell, in Act I., Sc. V., says, "I have found him out a long time since," Sheridan had added, "although he has contrived to deceive everybody else." But before the end of the play Joseph deceives even Lady Sneerwell. It may be at once noted that in this speech, "in short a sentimental knave," is again added in Sheridan's hand, and runs "in fact a sentimental knave," thus characterising Joseph at the outset. But Joseph's sentiments have grown into a second nature; Maskwell's are independent of the man.

[3] Strangely enough, Swift notes the same of Sheridan's grandfather, Dr. Thomas Sheridan, saying that he had no "ill-design upon any person but himself," and that he was "the greatest deceiver of himself on all occasions." Cf. Swift's "The Second Solomon," "Works," Vol. IX., p. 515. In the earlier versions for "The School for Scandal," Joseph (as "young Pliant") is much more sentimental than in the finished play. "Am I doomed for ever to suspense?" he sighs in a suppressed passage to Lady Teazle.

[4] Holland House MSS. Sheridan to Lady Holland.

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unbosoms himself to Lady Bessborough and her sister, the fair Duchess, for years his star rather than his flame. On the sad journey to the Hot Wells with his fading St. Cecilia, as he passed that Kingsdown hill where he had fought for her sake in his youth, a flood of memories overwhelmed him. Pierrot is in a penitent mood. He recalls how he had given himself up for dead, and he thus communes with remembrance: "What an interval has passed since, and not one promise that I then made to my own soul have I attempted to fulfil. I looked at the carriage that bore her now down the same road, and it wrung my heart to think over the interval, the present, and the too probable conclusion. My nerves are shook to pieces. The irregularity of all my life and pursuits, the restless, contriving temper with which I have persevered in wrong pursuits and passions makes reflexion worse to me than even to those who have acted worse. God bless you all!" In another and an earlier one of these letters, "What," he sighs, "has the interval of my life been and what is left me but misery from memory and a horror of reflexion?" Here is self-revelation indeed.[1]

At root he was romantic, and as will be seen later in the fragments of three plays, he gravitated instinctively to romance. ". . . Amo ergo sum," he wrote to his friend Grenville of Miss Linley at the close of 1772. "When I look on these verses," he wrote some forty years later, about his early poem on Mrs. Crewe, "Oh! how it reminds me what an ardent, romantic blockhead nature made me."[2]

Ossian was in the air when Sheridan was young, Macpherson's paraphrases were to Sheridan's taste, and Ossian lingered long afterwards and was quoted by Napoleon in his love-letters to Josephine. Sometimes Sheridan took the Ossianic tone. A romantic fragment on a wreck and a corpse which he himself buried exists in the Sheridan papers. He must have written it in 1786, when the Sheridans and Tickells visited Weymouth together. "I came with Mary," it runs—and "Mary" is Mrs.

[1] Cf. App. Vol. II., (4) *g* and *k*.

[2] Sheridan MSS. Sheridan to his second wife (about 1812); Sheridan to Grenville (cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 227).

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Tickell—"to the rocky strand, to see the wreck floating. . . . I saw many carry off the . . . prizes, some humanely looking to the living wretches, exhausted yet clinging to the wreck. . . . I alone remained. I looked on the Sea and Sky and thought of the feelings of those who had thus lost Friends. My soul was awed by the scene, and I resolved to bury the officer left and, as far as my memory recollected, to perform the rites of Sepulture. I dug a grave. I, on my knees, began to say, Hast thou no mother—who is the dearest Friend that will regret thy loss?—if it be thy Parents, speak in this glory, this shade—if thy Brother——. At that name I thought a whisper in the glade.—Is it thy Lover?—a Cupid appeared . . . a pale, a meagre form, no laughing roses on his cheek. He said '. . . I am Love, a ghastly figure . . . the lying cheat in me behold. Ask me no more, I bear her tears that would embalm his grave, I bear that incense. . . .' The pale Cherub stooping o'er the space dropped two tears and vanished. I closed the turf and said, O God be not angered with that Love. I stand [? here] to bury this dead man . . . and I turned the sand upon his Tomb."

This is not the conventional Sheridan. Quite early in life he twice emphasised his preference of romance to realism in fiction.[1] Indeed, his first mention of a book is of his deep interest in Sir Philip Sidney's "Arcadia," which also influenced his unpublished "Foresters"; and it may be here noticed that his allusion in "The School for Scandal" to "Petrarch's Laura" stood in the first draft as the more prosaic "Plutarch's Lives." To the last he was devoted to Spenser and could quote cantos of his "Faëry Queen" by heart. "I would much rather view the characters of life as I could wish they

[1] Once in his unpublished "The Sanctuary"—a scheme for female education (1774): "As for novels, there are some I would strongly recommend, but romances infinitely more. The one is a representation of the effects of the passions as they should be, the other as they are. The latter is falsely called nature; it is a figure of depraved or corrupt society. The other is the glow of nature." Sheridan MSS., cited by Fraser Rae, Vol. I., p. 273. The other instance comes from one of his early letters to Thomas Grenville.

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were than as they *are*," is his expression in one of the passages above noticed. The sentence is characteristic and betokens his attitude towards himself, even more than towards his neighbours, though he expected these also to take him in earnest. His romantic turn was that of a romantic sentimentalist—morbid, melodramatic, and half serious. He played hide-and-seek with life, which he too often regarded as a pageant or a comedy. Life, however, is not a game or a spectacle, and in the long run avenges itself. He could not escape consequences, and so his comedy of sentiment became tragic and pathetic.

19. The second type discernible in Sheridan—a type dissonant from the first—is that of Puck, a veritable imp of light, elfin but not ethereal, who laughs to behold "what fools these mortals be." He upsets the milk pails and terrifies the housewives, but his mischief is devoid of malice. Puck stands for the horseplay of fairyland. He delights in outwitting the dullards around him, and in playing master of the revels for Topsy-turvydom. He is a sprite, not a spirit. He is naughty, not wicked, and he is nice in his naughtiness.

Thus it fared with Sheridan, who, like his grandfather and two of his uncles, loved hoaxes and paradox. No wonder that his first wife wrote "on such an eccentric, restless being as Sheridan there is no dependence"; that her sister, who lovingly praises him, speaks to that wife of his "quirks and quiddities," of his fits and starts, of his visit by night to the dentist before a journey;[1] that he himself in one letter to the Duchess of Devonshire confesses to something "mysterious and unaccountable" about him, and in another acknowledges that one year—1789—had plunged him into every imaginable "scrape";[2] that years afterwards Byron also remarked that there was something "odd" about one who was too sober to remember an invitation, and Byron again is the source for that hackneyed

[1] "Ruspini cleans all our grinders. . . . He said S. called on him at ten at night, before setting out, to get his keys whitened." Sheridan MSS., Tickell Corr. (1786). For the previous sentence, cf. Mrs. Sheridan's letter to Mrs. Canning of the summer of 1789, Sheridan MSS.

[2] Cf. the new series of letters in the Appendix to Vol. II., (4) *b* and *h*.

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story of how Sheridan gave his name as "Wilberforce" to the watchman who found him in the gutter. He was the very lord of misrule in the court of Comus. Four of his plays hinge on a kind of practical joke. The duel in "The Rivals," the lover disguised as a doctor in "St. Patrick's Day," the exchange of costume in "The Duenna," and the screen in "The School for Scandal," while "The Critic" too is one long practical jest. His friends loved to play jokes on him as much as he did on them. Mrs. Tickell, in a letter of 1785, chaffs him unmercifully on his namesake, a dog, a "sad dog," belonging to Fox, that Tickell saw at an inn on a ride to St. Anne's.[1] Nothing in his neighbourhood long remained the same; wherever he went people and things changed places. He dressed up a yokel to represent a wit who was expected to convulse the table. He composed a sermon against avarice and induced a future bishop to preach it with a skinflint banker sitting under his nose. He got Charles Fox to muffle himself up and ride with him as an amateur highwayman in the wake of Tickell's postchaise along the Putney Road. He has the unique honour of having tried to put off a real highwayman with a note of hand. With Fox, again, and other exuberant statesmen, he was a member of the Prince's Salutation Club, which sallied forth from its headquarters in Covent Garden to paint the town red; but also, be it owned, to rescue forlorn damsels and plan improvements for the streets which it profaned. He could rarely withstand the temptation of tilting the board of the Italian image seller over the parapet of Westminster Bridge, though he amply compensated him afterwards.[2] He told his beautiful Duchess in 1792, when Adair, Richardson, and Fitzpatrick had been with him, that of course there was plenty of "sparring,"[3] and this fitted an age when the same Duchess amused herself by dowsing Charles Windham at

[1] Sheridan MSS. She adds, however: "Did Sheridan's cheeks burn last night? for we did nothing but talk of him and quote his verses."

[2] Cf. Taylor's "Records," Vol. II., p. 180, and for the amateur highwayman, cf. *ibid.*, p. 162.

[3] Cf. Appendix to Vol. II., (4) *f*.

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Chatsworth.[1] He and Tickell were always disordering great houses, splashing like porpoises in their lakes, disguising themselves after dinner as Turks, and then sending for the ladies to identify their spouses; leaping over ambuscades of cutlery, planning sham duels, pretending to be dead and returning to life again with alarming alacrity, or piquing the jealousy of husbands who lived happily ever afterwards.[2] He once quizzed the remonstrant Mrs. Siddons at the theatre by jumping into her carriage, accompanying her in silence to her door, and then alighting and parting from her without a word; while it was of this actress that Sheridan used the phrase, repeated by Sydney Smith, that one could as well make love to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Yet pranks like these were performed with such art and humour, that they were not only forgiven but applauded. Even in middle age he frisked it with the youngest, made up as a police officer to arrest Lady Sefton for unlawful gaming, and at an entertainment in the Pavilion, for which the room was darkened, actually sat down on the lap of a grave Russian Countess.[3] It was not the thing that enchanted but his way of doing it, and moralisers over Charles Surface usually forget

[1] Devonshire House MS., Georgiana's letter to her mother of August 19, 1784 (printed in the *Anglo-Saxon Review* for September, 1799): "We dawdled about to-day. . . . When we returned home we wetted Charles Wyndham at the Copper tree and the Cascade House."

[2] Cf. Huish's "Memoirs of George IV.," Vol. I., p. 102 (the hoaxing duel with Captain Hanger), and Rogers' "Table-Talk," pp. 63, 64; and for other antics, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 65, 186; Kelly's "Reminiscences"; Taylor's "Records"; and even the journalistic "Sheridaniana" and Percy's "Anecdotes," *passim*. For the "splashing," cf. the episode at Lord Palmerston's, Broadlands, which is given in one of Mrs. Sheridan's letters to Mrs. Stratford Canning in the Sheridan MSS., which is excerpted in Mr. Fraser Rae's "Sheridan" (Vol. II., p. 183); also another and much earlier one at Lacy's Isleworth house (mentioned by Angelo in his "Reminiscences," Vol. I., p. 54), when at five in the morning, after an all-night sitting, Sheridan fenced with Angelo, while Orpin (Mrs. Lacy's brother) swam in his clothes.

[3] Creevey, Vol. I., p. 57. She is there named Gerobtzof. She was also called Gerbetsow, but her real name was Gerepzof. She figured as Lord Whitworth's Egeria before he married the Duchess of Dorset; cf. Wraxall, Vol. IV., pp. 32, 34.

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that the reprobate in the comedy charmed not by his peccadilloes, but by the sweetness of his temper and the archness of his mien. Humour, indeed, and good humour, were the foundations of his wit. Even the man in the street who tripped him up and remarked, "I am only tying up my shoe," was answered by "D—— it, sir, you are always tying up that shoe!", a reply worthy of Charles Lamb. In the House of Commons itself, which had formed his only discipline and which he really reverenced, he would disport himself after his manner, once barking like a dog at the feet of Dent, the introducer of the dog-tax. He rallied it into ideas. He teased the Pittites and amused their chief beyond measure by his mimicries. In 1783 he mystified the suspicious Lord Chatham by making belief that the Coalition Ministry was in treaty with Lord Shelburne, the sphinx of the political desert, the "Jesuit of Berkeley Square."[1]

And he loved to confound the freezing solemnity of the orthodox Whigs. In 1800 he chagrined Lord Holland by forestalling his prepared speech on the Helder expedition. Indeed, sometimes in set speeches he did not scruple to borrow a passing phrase, and he would probably have said that one good turn deserves another.[2] In the February of the following year,

[1] Cf. Devonshire House MSS. The Duchess to her mother, June 22—24: "On Wednesday morning C. Fox, Fitzpatrick and Lord Robert [Spencer] happened to meet by Lord Shelburne's gate, where they saw that they were watched from Lord Chatham. Sheridan and Hare came up, and the Prince of Wales rode by, and they directly made Fitzpatrick go to enquire after his [Fitzpatrick's] nephews, etc., to make him believe there was a treaty there certainly is not with the Ministers and Malagrida [Lord Shelburne]." The date given is 1784, but this, surely, must be a slip for 1783, as the Coalition Ministry, not Pitt's, is probably meant. In *December*, 1784, Shelburne *was* trying to edge in with Pitt. Cf. "Hist. Man. Comm. Abergavenny MSS.," p. 69.

[2] For Lord H.'s speech, cf. his "Memoirs of the Whig Party." Since sweeping generalities have been used respecting Sheridan's plagiarisms in speeches, it may be apposite to give the only three instances chronicled against him. The first was his use of Sir A. Pigott's phrase about the Bourbons, that half the debt of England had been incurred in pulling them down, and the other half in setting them up. This has been cited by

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when Grey had announced his purpose of opposing a motion, Sheridan anticipated him by starting up in the midst of private business and with the order book in his hand.[1] In 1800 once more he embroiled the same ambitious patrician with the equally ambitious adventurer, Tierney,[2] and some eleven years later he dared and outdid the unnatural junto of Grey with the grasping Grenville. But he had old scores to settle with these gentry, whose own conduct, both in their previous bids for power and in their arrogance after Fox's death, was less dignified and infinitely less amusing. Nor had Grey used him well during the Regency intrigues of 1788 to 1789; indeed, it was to his own disinterestedness on that occasion that Sheridan appealed under the similar circumstances of twenty-three years later. The Duchess of Devonshire prefaces her manuscript Diary, after fourteen years had elapsed, by acknowledging that "he has stood the test of even poverty," and that she feels "convinced of the honour of his political sentiments." His fault in her eyes was "not any duplicity in fact," but an inability to "resist the pleasure of acting alone"; while she impugns his "judgment" and the "dislike of

Thomas Hardy in his "The Dynasts," Vol. III., p. 218, where he makes Whitbread call Sheridan "the wittiest man who ever sat here." The second, a citation from Aristophanes about Theseus, who had sat till he grew to his chair (applied by Sheridan to Pitt, and said to have been shown him by Fox in a letter from that pedantic martyr for Jacobinism, Gilbert Wakefield). The third was what Francis (himself thrice an arrogator of others' authorship) gave out as his own on the Peace of Amiens, viz., that it was one to be pleased at, not to be proud of. Windham complained that Sheridan plagiarised from him among others, but in the same passage he says that "the ludicrous instance of Lord Burleigh" was given him by Sheridan, "who, as he could not use it himself, wished it to be employed by someone else." "If I had recollected it in time I would have used it in a way to allot Sheridan the merit of his own thoughts." Cf. his "Diary," p. 195 (May 12, 1790). Windham was really scrupulous in such matters, but Sheridan took his good where he found it, always improved it, and often forgot whence it came.

[1] "Life of Lord Sidmouth," Vol. I., p. 348.

[2] Holland House MSS. "Lady Holland's Journal," which, since Lord Ilchester kindly showed it to me, has been published and ably edited by him.

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consultation," which "committed" the Whigs. Those who scan this interesting document will find that it discloses Fox's want of judgment, not Sheridan's, and that by then taking his own stand, by acting for others, but not with them, he provoked Fox and Grey into childish jealousies.[1] He did not play his own hand, but he spurned any dictation in the game, and so it came to pass that the Whig hierarchs regarded Sheridan's political life as a perpetual joke at their own expense. Perhaps they were not wholly wrong, for they shifted their position so smugly and smoothly that his temptation to set them by the ears must have been irresistible. None the less, even when they vilified him, they hoped for his assistance. His "levities," once wrote Fox to Grey, were "disgusting," but he would "come right in the end," and "right," it would seem, signified saying "ditto" to Mr. Fox.

Not all of his practical jokes, however, would now pass muster. Elizabeth Sheridan relates that a distinguished company at a fancy ball, where he figured as a pilgrim, were convulsed by his sudden disappearance and return *in propriâ personâ*. The same may be said of Tickell's rival mischiefs. We should now scarcely crack our sides to see a small boy creeping along the ledges of the Drury Lane boxes in order to secrete a bottle of asafœtida in the pocket of a spectacled critic near a dwarfish lord courting a charming actress. Yet this was considered the height of fun when Tickell arranged it for the annoyance of his friend Lawrence, Miss Farren and Lord Derby, who soon decamped under the ordeal.[2]

20. Sheridan's descent affords another clue to the labyrinth of his mind. Behind him marched a long procession of erratic ancestors. Whether race, as race, is responsible for individuality, is now being questioned; but at least we can track it to a source distinct from mere environment, Though free from

[1] Cf. Appendix, Vol. II. (3). How little he played his own hand is shown by his action in 1811 when by using his influence to retain Perceval, he deprived himself of a lucrative office, cf. Yonge's "Life of Lord Liverpool," Vol. I., p. 360.

[2] Mrs. Tickell's Corr., Sheridan MSS. The previous instance comes from Elizabeth Sheridan's Corr. in the LeFanu MSS.

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brogue[1] and trained in elocution by a professed mender of accent who boasted the cure even of Wedderburn's Doric, Sheridan, like his father, was Irish to the core. As Grattan finely declaimed of Kirwan, "the curse of Swift was upon him, to have been born an Irishman and to have possessed a genius."[2] Nor did satirists omit the taunt at the start of his parliamentary career. "Hail, Irish chairman," one of them gibed at him in 1780 when he was already sub-chairman of the Westminster Reform Committee,—"Hail, Irish chairman; Ireland, too, all hail."[3] Like Swift and Steele, Sterne and Goldsmith among authors, like Burke, Tierney and Courtenay among politicians, Sheridan was an Anglo-Irishman. So, too, among the masters of comedy had been Southern, while Farquhar was that freak, a Scotch-Irishman. Congreve, despite Southern's assertion and Dr. Johnson's conjectures, sprang from the Staffordshire so long associated with Sheridan's public career, and was Irish only by education. Nor among the links between Congreve and Sheridan should it be forgotten that the former's mother was a Fitzherbert.

Horace Walpole observes in a letter referring to Sheridan, ". . . Your Milesians have hearts as unsteady as the equator; they have always an ecliptic that crosses their heads and gives them a devious motion."[4] M. Taine has better distinguished the Irish nature from the Scottish and the Saxon by remarking that it is essentially and extravagantly chivalrous, expansive and sensuous—an "*esprit*" at once less balanced, less practical, and far more sympathetic.[5] From the outside Landor has summed it up in his "Dialogue" between Sheridan and Windham

[1] Wraxall expressly speaks about "the mellifluous tones of his voice," "nor was it accompanied by Burke's unpleasant Irish accent." "Posthumous Memoirs," Vol. III., p. 368. In Sheridan's early letters, however, he spells "Barnet" "Bernet," and "Lacy" "Leasy." Elizabeth Sheridan and her father were annoyed when a friend declared that she showed faint traces of brogue. Cf. LeFanu MSS.

[2] Speech on the Address, January 19, 1792.

[3] Cf. "An Epistle from Joseph Surface, Esqre., to Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esqre. G. Kearsley, 1780." The whole satire mocks at his origin.

[4] To the Countess of Ossory, October 26, 1781.

[5] "Hist. de la Littérature Anglaise," Bk. III., Ch. VI.

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by the words "fighting, frolic and pardon," and it was early noticed that Sheridan's fist was quite as valiant as his tongue.[1] Fighting, frolic and pardon certainly followed him from the cradle to the grave. In the Irish temperament are to be found most of the scattered qualities which he combined and heightened; the blend of gaiety and sadness, the unmethodical energy, the thriftlessness and tact, the eloquence, amiability and hopefulness, the theatrical instinct; the union, moreover, of pathos with satire, and of impromptu with polish.

These last are akin to the qualities of the mediæval singers of Provence, and it is significant that one of the characters in his manuscript remains of "King Arthur, a Fairy Opera," is "Damian, a Minstrel." Sheridan's wit, oratory and dramatic power found abundant expression, but the troubadour in him was hardly palpable even to himself. None however can read the fresh love lyrics of his youth without recognising this element. By the time Sheridan had quitted Harrow, the poetry of his people had almost forsworn its accent, and on its revival some thirty years later, it was in English that it denounced England. Yet it is noticeable that in his early burlesque of "Ixion," he introduced an Erse song, "Eilin a roon," a song moreover which Miss Linley sang,[2] while in the same piece he made one of his critics ejaculate, "Why the devil should not Alcmene talk Irish as well as English?" Even in "The School for Scandal" he uses the word "however" as no Englishman ever uses it, and throughout there are traces of Irish influence. After early boyhood, though in constant touch with Ireland,[3] and her continual advocate in Parliament, Sheridan never inhabited, or indeed visited what his wife styled "the land of Saints and Potatoes," though one of her early letters shows clearly that

[1] Cf. the "Epistle from Joseph Surface" (1780), above cited.

[2] "Ducca tu non vanuatin Eilin a roon
Kead mille a faltshir oot Eilin a roon," etc.
Sheridan MSS. She sang it to assist old Sheridan's Bath lectures.

[3] Through his brother Charles, and, till 1787, his friend Stratford Canning. In his Irish speeches Sheridan speaks of the Irish as "my countrymen." For his sincerity in their cause, cf. *post*, pp. 117—119.

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he once thought of doing so.[1] London had intervened, and Bath, the miniature of London. The muse of Erin, save in spaces of patriotic outburst, betook herself to little and alien elegiacs; Sheridan himself tamed his instinct and hung up his harp, not in the halls of Tara, but near the albums of Crewe and Chatsworth, and over the curtain of Drury Lane. Nevertheless, in two respects he partook of the troubadour spirit—a chivalresqueness that made him refuse to join the Prince of Wales in any persecution of his miserable wife, with the exclamation that never would he lift up his hand against a woman, and a singular devotion to that Prince, of whom Windham remarked during the political plots of the Regency and the Warren Hastings trial, that he would rather be drowned in the Ganges than wrecked on the coast of Wales.

21. One of Sheridan's earliest productions is an "Ode to Scandal,"[2] which preceded the famous comedy, and ends with this chivalrous appeal:

"To woman every charm was given
Designed by an indulgent heaven
To soften care.
For ye were formed to bless mankind,
To harmonise and soothe the mind,
Indeed ye were.
But when from those sweet lips we hear
In Nature's whisper Envy's sneer,
Your power that moment dies.
Each coxcomb makes your name his sport,
And fools when angry will retort,
What men of sense despise.
Leave then such vain disputes as these
And take a nobler road to please."

Contrast for one instant the tone of these lines with that of Congreve, whose cynicism towards women still prevailed in

[1] Mrs. Sheridan's letter referring to an Irish visit comes from the LeFanu MSS.; that containing her phrase is from a later letter to Mrs. Canning in the Sheridan MSS. Sheridan did not visit Ireland even in 1808, when he was nominated for County Wexford. Cf. Barrington's "Sketches," Vol. I., pp. 300 *et seq.*

[2] Cf. Appendix to this volume, A (1). "An Ode to Scandal, to which are added Stanzas on Fire, by the late R. B. Sheridan; London, printed for

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Sheridan's heyday. "You're a woman," says Valentine in "Love for Love," "one to whom heaven gave beauty when it grafted roses on a briar. You are the reflection of heaven in a pond, and he that leaps at you is sunk. You are all white, a sheet of lovely, spotless paper when you first are born, but you are to be scrawled and blotted by every goose's quill."

Contrast Wycherley's attitude:

"Love! 'Twas he that gave women their craft, their art of deluding. Out of Nature's hands they came plain, open, silly, and fit for slaves . . ." [1]

And then listen again to young Sheridan, discussing the fair

W. Wright, 46, Fleet Street, 1819." The comedy of "The School for Scandal" was founded on the above ode, with autographs, etc. This is a rare book. Mr. Sanders, in his excellent little monograph on Sheridan, has instanced the variations in metre as an argument against authenticity, but similar variations of metre occur in "The Duenna," notably in "When sable night" and in the song in "Pizarro," "Yes, yes, be merciless." In an early lyric—"Near Avon's ridgy Bank," the verses which allude to his meetings with his love at the Grotto—no less than six variations occur. Cf. Moore, Vol. I., p. 300, and *post*, ch. 10; and there are prosodical irregularities in his mock elegy on Brooks's. Moreover, I have found them in other MS. stanzas of Sheridan's, and his MS. songs in the notes for his "Drama of Devils" combine even more strongly marked variants. Cf. *post*, chs. 6 and 10. Nor on other grounds can I share his opinion that these verses were written by Tickell, whose "Camp" and "Carnival of Venice" were considerably indebted to Sheridan. His touch is quite distinct. Moreover, in the manuscript of "The Duenna" some verses are inserted in Scene II. of the second Act which are not printed, and seem to suggest a relationship to a part of this very composition, while there is a further MS. of these in the Sheridan MSS., beginning

"Dominion was given
To Woman from Heaven,
Pleasing bondage to the mind," etc.

This is missing in the Dublin editions of "The Duenna," which include some others omitted in the received version, and it is absent from "Songs, etc., in 'The Duenna'; J. Wilkie, 1776." But it must have figured in the play, since it was parodied a few months after its production in a political skit by Israel Pottinger. When we come to discuss his essay, "The Sanctuary," on the education of women we shall find that there are distinct echoes in his prose from this very ode. And the style and subject of one incident in it is illustrated by a poem, hitherto unknown, from the Sheridan MSS., which will be found transcribed in Appendix A (2).

[1] "The Country Wife," Act IV., Sc. III.

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sex in his quite modern treatise on female education. "The brighter they are," he wrote, "the more we shall be illumined. Theirs is a reflective light which gives a double lustre. Were the minds of all women cultivated by inspiration, men would become wise of course; not so with men to women. . . . Were all women suddenly to become virtuous, there would be no vice in man." "How different," he resumes, "is the character of a Sidney or an Agrippa to that of a modern man of fashion. In one there is the soul of Honour, the true Spirit of Love, the dear, delightful extravagance of gallantry, the romance of virtue. His friend is as himself, his Honour is his God. His life is the notion and operation of the nobler passions and feelings."[1] This sounds the stranger at a time when even great and accomplished women like Pitt's niece used language, openly and unabashed, that would now make men blush.[2] Women, Sheridan held, must be shielded and sheltered, and from this necessity he quaintly enough argued that they are born implacable. "Nothing is so unnatural," he wrote in some loose jottings of 1794, "as a forgiving woman. Placability and temper are masculine virtues, for they are virtues only to be got by trials and by trials to which women should not be exposed." In some early and disjointed reflections too we find the same outlook. He speaks of "the days of chivalry," "the forgiveness of injuries"; he says that "Patience is the fruit of suffering, the child of adversity," but that "Woman ought to be a passionate creature."[3] He disliked the masculine woman. "Let them have modesty," he wrote in his review of Lord Chesterfield's Letters, "I hate women linkboy-like." His ideal of woman resembles that of Farquhar, the sole comedian that he really studied, who calls her "the masterpiece and smile of the creation."[4] Throughout his notes for speeches applicable to

[1] "The Sanctuary," Sheridan MSS. (1774).

[2] For a striking example cf. Lady H. Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 95.

[3] Sheridan MSS.

[4] "The Constant Couple," Act V., Sc. III.

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the subject (and his advocacy of the conventual establishments in England is an instance) he dwells on the importance of education for women. "All the general depravity," he remarked in a passage against Pitt's efforts to suppress conventual schools, "comes from the ignorance of poor women, or the vices of the higher order." In connection with the labouring class, he observes, "You keep the women awake all day in order to prevent them sleeping all night"; while in some other notes for a late speech during the Peninsular War, he inveighs against Napoleon's "meanness" in preventing woman's political influence.[1] His chivalry often figured,[2] nor least on the dubious occasion when he salved Mrs. Fitzherbert's feelings by praising her virtues in the House of Commons. And in 1793, when the Aliens Bill was brought in, he moved to exempt ladies from its restrictions, "to show," he said, "that the age of chivalry was not gone in this country, whatever might become of it anywhere else."[3] He was uniformly chivalrous to the hapless "Perdita." We shall have occasion to notice a new and remarkable instance in the case of his own wife as our history proceeds.

The man who relished taverns and toped in them, detested the least indelicacy, and Mrs. Tickell, who sometimes handed on broad stories to her sister, stipulates in her letters that Sheridan shall not be shocked by their repetition, while she pictures him drawing down his mouth as he listens.[4] In a manuscript of "The School for Scandal," he even erased the line—which stands in the printed version—about Lady Teazle having

[1] Sheridan MSS.

[2] Mrs. Creevey records an instance in the summer of 1806 at Brighton: "Poor Charlotte [afterwards Lady Dinorben] was rather 'in the basket,' for you know Ogles and Greys do not take much pains to make a stranger comfortable; but old Sherry, with his usual good taste, was very attentive to her."

[3] "Speeches," Vol. II., p. 144.

[4] In one of her letters she says, "He hates indelicacies. . . . There, oh dear, how he will draw down his mouth and not comprehend any joke at all." Sheridan MSS. (September, 1786). In another of 1784 she says "I'm afraid S——'s modesty would be shocked."

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"found out that she has got an old husband";[1] and this is but one example out of many. Some coarseness may have lurked under his elegance, but to the last he was proud of never having published a word that could revolt modesty. This unmodish delicacy was due to something more than mere nicety of taste. Though his life was free, his emotions were religious, as befitted the son of a man who declared that religion was his sole source of happiness.[2] Lord Holland, who scoffed at his deathbed on the flimsy ground that irregular habits may "co-exist with strong religious apprehensions," does not attempt to deny that "he always affected a sense of religion,"[3] and this disposes of the myth that he was banned from Crewe for blasphemy at table. Though in early youth he seems, together with Fox and Fitzpatrick, sometimes to have made light of "conventional" duties, the blasphemy of a set of blasphemers always disgusted him. One of the characters in "The Duenna" remarks that those who profess most in such matters are ever the least sincere, and Sheridan was the Charles Surface of religion, though his religious feeling, like the rest of him, took its own form. "We consider God," he wrote in one of his youthful preludes, "as loving us not from any virtuous action we can make to Him or, as it is foolishly said, for His glory—no! His attachment is to human nature . . . and His resentment is against the wronging of His creatures."[4] He told his son's tutor how he hated all who unsettled the young, while in a speech at the outset of the French War he deliberately recorded his horror of proselytising

[1] Act IV., Sc. III. In his correspondence, too, with Linley, his father-in-law, about the songs for "The Duenna," he tells the composer that "we are much too chaste in London to admit such strains as your 'Bath Spring' inspires." Sheridan to T. Linley, October, 1775, transcribed by Moore, Vol. I., p. 157.

[2] Cf. "Memoirs of Mrs. Francis Sheridan," p. 302, and for old Sheridan's religious life, cf. p. 348.

[3] "Further Memoirs of the Whig Party," p. 243.

[4] Sheridan MSS. The lacuna runs "and He despises not the woman's wrongs." There are some lines in Edward Fitzgerald's "Bird-Parliament" which recall the sense of this passage. The instance of raillery at "conventional" duties comes from a MS. letter of the Duchess of Devonshire, where Fox and Fitzpatrick were also arraigned by a dignity of the Church.

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infidelity.[1] In one of his earlier letters he blames the prevailing paganism of Church absentees,[2] among the chief of whom even Pitt must be counted;[3] and he deplored the influence of metaphysics. Tom Sheridan, in his boyhood, was drawn towards vague necessarianism by his clergyman uncle, the absent-minded Ozias Linley. One day he ventured to pose his father by asking him if he had ever in his life done anything with entire and absolute indifference and without any motive. Sheridan answered that he had, that he could be completely indifferent and unactuated by any motive whatever. Tom eagerly demanded the occasion. "In listening to *you*," was the rejoinder.

To Sheridan's Celtic aspect, moreover, belongs his demonstrativeness in grief. "Perdita" Robinson has described how penetrated she was with his sensibility at the death of her child. If it was thus in the sorrow of strangers, how much more so under his own bereavements! "His heart," wrote Mrs. Canning to Sheridan's younger sister, "is not of a nature to be easily reconciled to the loss of anything he loves." When his little daughter died he was heard sobbing and moaning all the

[1] ". . . Thus far he would say, and it was an opinion he had never changed or concealed, that although no man can command his conviction, he had ever considered a deliberate disposition to make proselytes in infidelity as an unaccountable depravity of heart. Whoever attempted to pluck the belief or the prejudice on this subject from the bosom of one man, woman or child, committed a brutal outrage. . . ." Speech of February 12, 1793, "Speeches," Vol. II., p. 155.

[2] "The others have led a most ungodly life—never once have they been inside of a church, nor permitted me, though I often got up early in the morning on purpose. However, I took my opportunities when I could steal a few minutes to myself, to express my gratitude to the Maker of all the woods, hills and lakes, which they admired as heathens would. The church at Axminster is a very good building, as is that of Bridport; but I found the greatest comfort in the new chapel at Totnes, where I heard a very fine discourse from a young man who is a curate with a large family and only £40 a year, so unequal are the distributions of Church emolument in this country, which is a reproach to Christianity, and has often led me to reflect how—I beg pardon, I must break off, as I hear the last bell tolling for the garrison prayers. . . ." Written from Plymouth to Mrs. Stratford Canning in 1786 (transcribed by Fraser Rae, Vol. II., p. 287, n. 1).

[3] Cf. Lady H. Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. II., p. 167.

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night. When her mother passed away, his paroxysms exceeded all bounds.[1] A concealed eye-witness, whose manuscript account is here given for the first time, recounts how Sheridan descended into the vaults of Wells Cathedral, and there knelt over the corpse of one whom in life he had by turns adored and provoked. In an attitude of prayer he poured out his misery, and continued in the chamber of death till the clock was heard to strike midnight. Then he arose, bidding farewell to her whose life had cherished and ennobled him.[2] Twenty years afterwards, Wilberforce has told us how, amid a throng of distinguished art lovers, Sheridan, some three years before his own death, led him up to her picture, and stood gazing at it with affection.[3]

But Sheridan also dedicated himself to a Prince whom he idealised to the verge of idolatry, though he was certainly no sycophant,[4] and even as a stripling had told his first Achates, "A Prince's smiles are not to be depended on."[5] In

[1] Some remarkable particulars of Sheridan's frantic grief on these two last occasions are given from letters of Mrs. Stratford Canning at the time to Sheridan's sister Elizabeth in the "Memoirs" of Sheridan's mother by his niece, pp. 424—429. Kelly saw him "sit and cry like a child night after night." Cf. "Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 115.

[2] Sheridan MSS. Letter (1836) from John Helyar Rocke to Richard Brinsley, grandson of the great Sheridan. (Preserved among the papers presented to the Vaughan Library at Harrow by Mr. Wilfred Sheridan.)

[3] "Life of Wilberforce," Vol. IV., p. 114. (At the British Institution, May 8, 1813.) "The Prince of Wales came up to me and accosted me very handsomely. [Fie, St. Wilberforce!] . . . Poor Sheridan took me up to his first wife's picture, and stood with me looking at it affectionately some time. All the lovers of the Arts, there."

[4] Among many instances there is an interesting one in a letter of 1788 from the first Mrs. Sheridan to Mrs. Canning: "S. promised the Prince to pass two days with him last week at Brighton, but he was prevented, and did not even send an excuse. However, the Prince was very good-natured about it, he being such a favourite, you know, and I fancy he will still look in." Creevey especially notices the dignity of Sheridan's manner towards the Prince. Lord Holland chose a bad point against Sheridan when, angered at the Prince's opposition, he called Sheridan's conduct "servile."

[5] Letter to Thomas Grenville, January 4, 1773 (cited by Mr. Fraser Rae, Vol. I., p. 246).

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the flush of his youth, indeed—long before he had sunk into being a Nero of the suburbs—George the unsaintly seemed a Florizel graced with every charm. But even then he lacked a heart. Sheridan's fancy supplied the void. He gave a heart of gold to the Prince of Wales, and it is no exaggeration to say that he wore that badge on his own sleeve. If an instance be required of the extremes to which Sheridan pushed his infatuation, it exists in the circumstances attending his treatment of the Receivership of the Duchy of Cornwall, the sole office ever bestowed on him by the man whom he had so long served, an office, moreover, which Sheridan wanted to transfer to his recently married son.[1] George had actually pledged its reversion before he conferred it, though his affectionate wishes that the gift were better worth Sheridan's acceptance still remain on the paper that they were worth. To screen the Prince from misconstruction—as at the outset of his career he had sought to screen his second in the second duel with Mathews[2]—Sheridan for a space resigned it, and it was not till four years later that, worn and embarrassed, he could reap any of its tardy benefit.[3] It was his avowed ambition to mediate between the people and the Prince, whom he ended by preferring to his party. But he closed his ears to the gentle voice of his "St. Cecilia." He stood midway between the wife who was his guardian angel[4] and the Prince who proved his evil genius. He soothed or laughed away her fears, and was drawn to follow one whom even treachery could not trust, most of the journey down his long descent to limbo.

[1] Cf. Creevey, Vol. I., p. 51.

[2] Cf. his letter to Thomas Grenville, January 4, 1773, given by Rae, Vol. I., p. 245. ". . . my return for having so strenuously endeavoured to screen Paumier and for his sake to prevent the intended publication of the transaction."

[3] Sheridan's letters on this subject (transcribed by Moore) are among the Sheridan MSS. at Frampton Court.

[4] This phrase is no hyperbole. "Think of me always," she wrote in 1786 from Crewe Hall to him in London, "if ever 'ee [this was her 'little language'] should be tempted by the wicked ones, and that I love thee better than all the world besides, and will for ever."

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His Irish origin, then, helps us further to explain some problems of his character and ironies of his career; and it should be borne in mind that he emerged at a time when Irishmen and Scotsmen were conspicuous in politics and literature, the day of Burke and Dundas, of Goldsmith and Hume, of Sterne and Smollett. The atmosphere of his environment clashed with the atmosphere of his inheritance. He had no stake in the country of his father's adoption, nor had he been nursed in the lap of England.

22. But this is not all. He was no ordinary Irishman, nor, indeed, an ordinary being. Take his career. His progress seemed slow, but his successes were sudden. He became great, as it were, by stealth. He sauntered into notice and glided into fame. He stole into the wills and affections of men and women by a wizardry of his own. Yet out of the many incongruous colours which at first sight would seem to baffle portraiture, a distinct picture emerges. Through the changeful scenes of his earlier political life he is felt like some noiseless presence prompting the chief actors, and, as will be shown in a future episode, actually directing the stage. He lurks unseen till the moment is ripe—a moment often deferred by himself. His power seldom disappoints, and often surprises. The knight of the free lance enters the lists at the eleventh hour, bows to the queen of beauty, charges redoubtable heroes, tilts at bewitched quintains, and in every tournament carries away the prize. In vain does envy strive to outstrip admiration. He owns the talisman of personal magnetism, and often as the courtiers turn on their heel —their wont when genius blocks the way—he calmly pursues the zigzag of his path with an inscrutable smile that wins them back again. But the plaudits die away. Without an audience he broods and pines. He waits, drowning reflection, and draining bumper on bumper to the past which he vows to retrieve. A fresh bugle-call dispels his apathy. He starts eager from his cups, charges new enemies, and gathers fresh laurels. Once more he feels invincible, till, too often the

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world's dupe and his own, disillusioned,[1] though never soured, battered by disease, intemperance, and distresses, he sinks at length into a neglected death-bed but an honoured grave. His ideals were more of the mind and the feelings than of the soul. In politics and for posterity he abides, like all his colleagues except Burke and perhaps Grey, more a voice than an influence. But, like Fox, he remains a powerful presence, and by three of his dramas he survives in our life and language.

23. There was something in him, however, beyond the shows of existence, much as their glitter appealed to the pageantry of his nature. A sturdiness of fibre peeps through all the glossy leaves and the gaudy fruit. He was the last of the parliamentary giants, as even Creevey acknowledged when he died. A hero in the sense of a noble deliverer he could never be. Yet about him cling shreds of the heroic—a fellowship with forlorn hopes, a modesty in fame, a courage under adversity, an independence of outlook, a magnanimity towards his mightiest foe,[2] a lifelong conflict with the impossible.

Intellectually he was truly great, and in one instance supreme. It may be asked what other greatness can he be said to have attained? The question is always hard to answer, especially in the case of one so amphibious as Sheridan; the reader of these pages will judge for himself. But in this prelude we may safely apply the test laid down by Matthew Arnold, "*In what line was he a powerful spirit?*" The small mind thrives in the line of least resistance. Not so Sheridan's. He stood unaided and unsubsidised. Huge obstacles and majorities confronted him, yet a powerful spirit in the cause of liberty he remained, without stooping to forget Britain in all the confusions which the French Revolution

[1] "I begin to think," he sighs in one of his later letters, "that this world of ours is not a pure, white globe."

[2] A signal instance occurs in his tribute to Pitt's memory on May 13, 1806, on his motion for the repeal of the Additional Forces Bill. Cf. "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 504; and *post*, Vol. II., Chap. 12. For Creevey, cf. his "Papers," Vol. II, p. 257: "After all, he is the last of the giants."

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propagated.[1] While he would never regard aliens from an insular standpoint, he was no cosmopolitan, but a patriot. This is the point where he diverges from the English Jacobins, many of whom played the French game at a moment when Stanhope actually colluded with Barrère.[2] Tied to a party fast degenerating into a faction, yet scorning to join the other, he rose above both when he stood up to quell the two naval mutinies with a promptness that may then be said to have saved the nation. He was a patriotic Radical.[3] "Shall we yield," he exclaimed, "to mutinous sailors? Never, for in one moment we should extinguish three centuries of glory." And again, three years later, "If our flag is to be insulted, let us nail it to the topmast of the nation; there let it fly, while we shed the last life-drop of our blood in protecting it, and let it be degraded only when the nation itself is overwhelmed."[4] This was his true climax; he had risen to solid reality. "Thank God," he exclaimed, "party is dead and buried."[5] But at all times it was in the line of freedom that he battled. Burke, in a famous vindication, exclaimed, "Let us pass on—for God's sake let us pass on!"[6] Sheridan passed on also. While

[1] It should not be forgotten that the French Revolutionists in 1793 refused to drink Sheridan's health on the express ground that he (like Fox) ran counter to any idea of revolution in England. And to this he proudly referred in a speech of that year.

[2] Cf. "Hist. Man. Comm. Fortescue MS." ("Dropmore Papers"), Vol. II., p. 582, "Barrère annonça ensuite au comité [*i.e.*, de Salut Public] que son ami Stanhope recommandoit au comité un Colonel Hamilton, Anglois," etc. [1794, May]. This comes from the important secret accounts of the committee's proceedings, betrayed by its Secretary, and transmitted to Francis Drake, English Resident at Genoa, who forwarded them to Lord Grenville.

[3] Cf. Vol. II., Chap. I.

[4] Cf. "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 399. In his speeches regarding the Helder expedition of the preceding year, he enlarged on the danger of England's taking a fleet manned and surrendered by mutineers. It should be noticed that one of his first speeches in Parliament concerned naval affairs, cf. Vol. II., Chap. I.

[5] Lady Holland's Journal (January, 1799).

[6] Speech at the Guildhall, Bristol, November, 1780. "Works," Vol. II., p. 129. The passage begins, "Applaud us when we run; console us when we fall; cheer us when we recover."

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Burke's rich imagination exalted a cause for which he theorised and harangued, while Fox raved for it, Sheridan visualised, popularised, acted it before an audience. For that cause, as they severally understood it, both Burke and Fox had a passion; the one that of a zealot, the other that of a tribune, and for it the former especially was in a perpetual passion. But Sheridan lent it the music of his voice, the strength of his sarcasm, and the lightning of his wit. In his own phrase—jotted down for one of his speeches on the war against France—he wished to "convince the national soul." By his blandishment freedom crept into the common heart. The champion of Press liberty sapped the strongholds of privilege and prejudice which the others stormed.[1] Of all his co-orators he is the least monotonous. He passes with ease from grave to gay, from lively to severe, and he strikes home. The light artillery of his style did more execution than their heavy cannonades; and here, once more, he resembles Beaumarchais; the laugh was on his side. Milton's paraphrase from Horace applies to Sheridan:

> "Joking decides great things
> Stronger and better oft than earnest can."

Moreover, he was large and luminous, though his genius was critical and his full force lay in opposing. He was not so fierce as Fox, or so majestic as Pitt, or so fine as Burke; but he was more incisive than any of them. He knew how to relate complex details to the few broad and simple ideas into which, as he early contended, every subject should be resolved.[2] And he further differed from the rest in an almost feminine intuition.

[1] Brougham said that Sheridan's speech in 1810 on the liberty of the Press was worth the whole of the Begum Charge. His speech of 1799 on the same theme was equally telling. Burke took a contrary ply, denouncing in 1793 the "Friends of the Liberty of the Press." He called it "The grand instrument of the subversion of order, of morals, of religion, and, I may say, of human society itself." Cf. his "The Conduct of the Minority," "Works," Vol. III., p. 478.

[2] His manuscript comments on "Chesterfield's Letters." "There are on every subject but a few leading and fixed ideas; their tracks may be traced by your own genius as well as by reading."

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He pierced through things rather than dissected them. He could even be prophetic, as when he predicted the French descent on the West Indies which happened five years afterwards.[1] He summed up situations lightly, as when he stamped Pitt's illusory remission of a few taxes by saying, "The ministers break our heads that they may give us a plaster,"[2] and earnestly, as in his fine sentence on the Quiberon expedition, "Englishmen, it is true, have not shed their blood, but the honour of England has bled at every pore." He added living phrases to our language.

He was an artist in politics. What he saw he believed in as the actor believes in a part which he has created. To realise the sincerity of his standpoint we need only read the two short letters to Lady Bessborough hitting off two heated debates, and revealing the man far better than tomes of description.[3] In these pages his full parliamentary voice will be heard for the first time. No real student of history will deny that Sheridan was serious in a number of his rallying grounds, though he sometimes stood in equivocal positions, and in political management would often first prescribe the moderate measures congenial to him, and then brave out the more violent course with the loudest. But on vital issues, in his own words, he did not only wish to excel his countrymen, he desired his country to excel.[4] He was not, to quote Burke on another, "a mere weathercock on the top of the edifice, exalted for his levity and versatility, and of no use but to indicate the shiftings of every fashionable gale." When Fox, in his rage at hostilities against revolutionary France, shut his eyes to the truth that the Jacobins were bent on conquest, Sheridan, as the same Burke admitted,

[1] "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 306 (June, 1800). "If I were to say that the French . . . might fit out an armament at Brest against our Colonies and send it to the West Indies, the right honourable gentleman (Pitt) would assure me that such a scheme is impracticable."

[2] In the first instance, cf. "Speeches," Vol. II., p. 82. (Speech on the "State of the public income," February 17, 1792.)

[3] Cf. Appendix to Vol. II. (4), n. (1 and 2).

[4] Applied to the Athenians (not as has been said to the Romans) in his rough MS. draft for notes on "Chesterfield's Letters."

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was pre-eminent in confronting facts.[1] Pitt warmly commended his conduct during the crisis of 1797, and praised him when in the following year he supported Government at a moment as critical in a speech which Alison truly entitles "noble." We shall find that his aid to Addington was well-founded and in favourable contrast on this point alike with the shabbiness of Pitt and the factiousness of Fox. His keen advocacy in 1808 of the Peninsular War and his quick recognition that at length Bonaparte had a nation to reckon with, gave voice to the people and shamed the Cabinet. Nor was he without causes at heart. The reform of the Scotch boroughs—a prelude to English reform—which he made his own from 1787 to 1792 in the teeth of Dundas, the Scotch dictator, was acclaimed at Edinburgh in 1805 and in 1833 achieved by Act of Parliament.[2] And respecting Ireland, he never ceased to claim for his "countrymen" the freedom so long deferred or withheld. His motion for it in 1805, when he turned on Pitt for his treachery to the Catholics, is a fine burst of genuine feeling, and among his notes for that speech in the Sheridan manuscripts is an appeal which speaks for itself:—"Let us have at least the alliance of our own Empire. Give Ireland the only subsidy she wants—justice and plain dealing." His Irish patriotism was evinced in his preface to "The Rivals," written when he was only twenty-four, while he gave Ireland his attention before he entered Parliament, as will be found when we come to his manuscript pamphlet on "Absentees." Those who have questioned his sincerity towards Ireland have never perused his correspondence. When he first espoused the Irish cause, in a speech which he reprinted,[3] his younger sister, then with

[1] Cf. Burke's "The Conduct of the Minority," "Works," Vol. III., p. 483.

[2] It is amusing to find Fox writing at the close of 1792 that he "will press Sheridan on this question." Cf. "Fox's Corr.," Vol. III., p. 260. Sheridan had slaved at it for years, as a mass of papers in the Sheridan MSS. attest. The hostile author of "The Letters of Brutus" (Edinburgh, 1791) says in his address to Sheridan, "You courted the *Scots Reform*, a Drab who was willing to be won, and whose turbulent spirit was congenial to your own."

[3] This has escaped attention. His pamphlet of 1785 was "The Legislative Independence of Ireland vindicated in a Speech of Mr. Sheridan's on the

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him in London, thus wrote to her married sister in Dublin: "Dick is very warm about the Irish. Mrs. Sheridan cannot conceive the violent attachment he has to that country, but from her I found that he acts on this occasion from his own feelings, totally independent of any wish his party may have to harass the Minister."[1] And this is borne out by a letter of the same year to his brother Charles, where he says of Pitt's Irish "Propositions": "If you accept this settlement in its present form I hope I shall never hear the name of Ireland again while I live."[2] Writing to Mrs. Canning, that wife's dearest friend, about the same commercial proposals, he says: "The countries seem playing at cross purposes. . . . They mean to try to cajole Paddy out of his notions on the independent legislature, and persuade him that a parcel of fine words on the subject are the same thing." In the ensuing political campaign which then wrecked Pitt's measure he bore an important part, and his letters on the subject to Stratford Canning and their friend Corry remain among his papers.[3] None inveighed more strongly than he did against Pitt's unwise and unjust attempts to fetter Catholic education in England.[4] It was expressly to benefit the poor that he championed Catholic emancipation. The cry of "No Popery" he termed the "watchword of folly and

Irish Propositions on Monday, 30th May, 1785. Also an Authentic Copy of the Twenty Resolutions, etc. Price a British Sixpence. Crooney. Dublin, 1785."

[1] LeFanu MSS. Elizabeth Sheridan to Mrs. Alicia LeFanu, "Monday, 20 June, 1785."

[2] Sheridan MSS. R. B. Sheridan to his brother Charles, "Bruton Street, Sat. Night." The sentence in his preface to "The Rivals" runs: "And if the condemnation of this comedy (however misconceived the provocation) [from the character of Sir Lucius] could have added one spark to the decaying flame of national attachment to the country supposed to have been reflected on, I should have been happy in its fate."

[3] In another letter of this year Mrs. Sheridan tells her friend: "They tell me that Sheridan made the best speech on the Irish business, Monday, that was ever heard. I hear nothing but his praises, which (between you and I) I have great pleasure in, 'tho' he *is* my husband." She alludes, of course, to "The School for Scandal."

[4] In the case of the conventual establishments.

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faction," and "an act of political profligacy." He called "toleration" a "mitigated persecution," and he said that he "did not wish the Catholics to rise to degradation." He received the thanks of a distinguished Catholic for "the liberal and humane" part which had "distinguished his public conduct."[1] If he was half-hearted when Fox hastened to press the full question at the impossible moment of Addington's ministry and as a trump card for opposition, he never deviated from an adherence to that cause. If he misliked the ridiculous half-measure which dealt a death-blow to the last Administration in which he held office,[2] none the less it will be found that towards the end he was prepared to forfeit the Prince's favour rather than forego his liberty to vote for emancipation.[3] Though in the Warren Hastings proceedings he was partly a comedian, he was never a comedian where the defence of the country was concerned, nor where the humble needed a protector. He succeeded in undoing Pitt's futile Additional Forces Bill.[4] All along he resisted the rankling injustice of the

[1] Sheridan MSS. The correspondent was "J. Milner Winton." The other instances come from various notes from his speeches in the Sheridan papers. The first and second form a long draft for his Westminster election speech of 1807 and for a speech against Perceval.

[2] He said that he "approved of the promptitude with which the last Administration had dropped the bill, much more than he did of their original introduction of it." Cf. "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 533 (August 13, 1807).

[3] This appears, among other evidence, from a letter to the Prince, taken in connection with Sheridan's notes to a speech of Wellesley's; and cf. *post*, Vol. II., Chapter 7. It has escaped notice that, with the exception of Grey and Fox, who remained satisfied with good intentions, none of the party were throughout and out-and-out both for Catholic emancipation and for parliamentary reform. Burke was against reform, but for Catholic emancipation, though he did not favour a full emancipation of slaves. Grenville in 1792 was against reform (cf. "Fox's Corr.," Vol. III., p. 262); he wished to oppose it without hostility, and in 1809 he was only a qualified supporter of Catholic emancipation. As for Tierney, once an extreme Foxite, he joined Addington in 1803, Canning in 1827, and Goderich in 1828.

[4] In May, 1806. His closing speech on this topic was magnanimous. "Let the failure of the measure," it concluded, "be buried in his grave and never be remembered in his epitaph."

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game laws and the penal code; he assailed the abuses of the prisons, he raised his voice against the gambling facilities of Government lotteries, and much later he denounced the cruelties of bull-baiting in a speech powerfully urging rational and harmless amusements for the people.[1] He uniformly voted with Wilberforce against the slave trade. Such causes enlisted his generosity, and, so far, his career justified, what he twice claimed, that "while he had a seat in that House, he should ever be found an advocate of the weak against the strong, and of the helpless against those who had the power, and too often the will, to oppress them."[2]

For America there was always a tender spot in his heart. A striking instance in the shape of an ode by him during the year of his "Rivals" and "Duenna" will appear as our narrative proceeds. That ode, rejoicing in the struggle for freedom and actually addressed to the Sovereign, boldly warns him that English resistance to transatlantic liberty must result in ruin; the great Chatham had done the same in the same memorable year. Early in life, according to Miss Edgeworth, who had been shown the letters by Mrs. LeFanu, he rejected a bribe of £20,000 for advocating the American cause.[3] But he did advocate it earnestly, when he first took office, in his letters to Thomas Grenville respecting the Peace of Paris.[4] And in a speech twelve years later, celebrating America's "wisdom, prudence and magnanimity," "America remains," he commented on the defeats which opened the anti-Jacobin war, "America remains neutral, prosperous and at peace. . . . Observe her name and government rising above the nations of Europe with a simple but commanding dignity which wins at once the respect, the confidence, and the affection of the world. And is America degraded by this confidence and this condition? Has

[1] "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 413 (May 24, 1802). For the two preceding instances, cf. *ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 99 (Lottery Bill, April 4, 1792), and Vol. III., p. 325 (Cold Bath Fields Prison Debate, May 21, 1795).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 522 (1807).

[3] Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., pp. 212, 213.

[4] In 1782. Cf. Fraser Rae, Vol. I., pp. 385, 386; Fitzgerald, Vol. I., pp. 272—275.

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Washington debased himself by his temper and moderation? . . . The Americans are at this moment the undismayed, undegraded, and unembarrassed spectators of the savage broils of Europe, whilst we are engaged in a struggle, as we have been this day distinctly told by our ministers, not for our glory or posterity, but for our actual existence as a nation."[1]

His rhetorical sympathy, like Fox's, travelled across the seas, and his name is coupled with his friend's when the Duchess of Devonshire and the English chiefs of opposition interceded for the rescue of Marie Antoinette.[2] And in one curious instance, already indicated, Sheridan's voice penetrated a class that had small confidence in Fox. It has been said that Pitt represented the traders of England. This is only half true of one whose real power rested on the slow shrewdness of the landed gentry. Of Sheridan, however, by a strange stroke of irony, this is true to the letter. He was called "the tradesman's friend," and it was unkindly hinted that he had revived the old Roman tie of patron and client, because those who beset his door in the morning were grateful for his exertions overnight. He pleaded for the West Indian merchants, though his vote was never given against negro emancipation. He defended the tobacconists in a speech that lasted five hours. Throughout his career he always extolled the common sense, good nature, and sterling qualities of the *bourgeoisie*.[3]

His insight enabled him to see more than one side or the outside of a question. In 1800, when he hoped for peace, he praised Bonaparte's best qualities,[4] but as time went on he denounced him fiercely, and we have seen that he disdained to follow the flock of politicians who trooped with Fox to Paris after the truce of Amiens. The unfailing wit of his eloquence

[1] "Speeches," Vol. II., p. 252 (speech on the Address, January 21, 1794). The reporter's (probably Woodfall's) version of this speech exists among the Sheridan MSS.

[2] Original papers in the writer's possession.

[3] This formed a continual ground of satirical attack. Cf. the able pamphlet, "Letters of Brutus" (Edinburgh and London, 1791), pp. 10, 11.

[4] Cf. "Speeches," Vol. III., pp. 381 *et seq.*

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seldom lowered the dignity of debate—a *trait* which Lord Holland himself praised, and which could inspire awe as well as admiration.[1] At all times, too, Sheridan, like Byron, scathed hypocrisy. He loved to contrast profession with motive, and practice with pretext, to unravel the skeins of personal pique, to knock down the screens of political cant and to expose the frail realities behind them. His mislike of Pitt and his policy was unfeigned, as may be seen from a sentence to Lady Bessborough in 1801 when he wrote "detesting the dog as I do, I cannot withhold this just tribute to the scoundrel's talents."[2] In all these respects he was genuine, though if political principle means edifying consistency with no theatrical departures, he must often be called more valiant than principled. Burke was fully as inconsistent, but he stood on a far loftier moral pinnacle, and that height ennobles most of his inequalities. With Sheridan feeling stood for conviction, and he stated his own case in a distich:

> "Sense may be thine, but not an overweight;
> It may the ballast be, but not the freight."[3]

His political ballast, it is true, was weightier than his ethical, but his buoyancy of sail always went ahead of them both, and what Lord Holland observed of Lord Wellesley may be held in the main to fit Sheridan, "He had more genius than prudence . . . and was more capable of doing extraordinary things well than of conducting ordinary transactions with safety and propriety." And yet here again we are met by the contrasts of sense and foresight on many emergencies, and it should be remembered that during a parliamentary career of thirty-two years not three were spent in office and the power that brings a sense of responsibility. Sheridan was eminently a temperament, and mere temperament, however forcible, is not character,

[1] In 1805, when Sheridan "fired upon Pitt for his treachery of the Catholics," Pitt's eyes "started from their sockets, and seemed to tell him if he advanced an atom further he would have his life." Cf. Creevey, Vol. I., p. 33.

[2] Cf. the Appendix to Vol. II.

[3] Sheridan MSS; Prologue to Hannah More's "Fatal Falsehood."

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which may be defined roughly as temperament impressed by will. But neither is character wholly bounded by moral balance, and conduct itself—"three-fourths of life"—is also subject to excesses. Moral balance is much, but it is not all, and sound personality, even when erratic, can influence the world for good. This may even account for the license instinctively accorded to the aberrations of genius. Burns is a signal example. If anyone ever showed individual character, it was Burns—who was woefully deficient in balance. So also, to travel out of Britain, with Heine, who said of himself what may well be said of the political Sheridan, "Lay no laurel wreath on my bier, but lay a sword, for I have been a brave soldier in the liberation war of humanity."

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OVERTURE

THE MAN AND THE MOMENT

PART II.—THE MOMENT

"We were invited to one of their public diversions, where we hoped to have seen who were the persons of the greatest abilities among them. But instead of that they conveyed us into a huge room lighted up with abundance of candles, where this lazy people sat hours to see several feats of ingenuity performed by others, who, it seems, were paid for it."—SWIFT (adapted by Steele) in the *Spectator*, No. 50.

1. SHERIDAN at once expressed and contradicted the paradoxes of his age, its ornateness yet oddity, its shabbiness and splendour, its love both of the formal and the flamboyant, its dead levels ranged below heights of aspiration, its passion for criticism, yet creativeness of modern ideas. For events compelled them. The eighteenth century was a time in which almost everything happened, and Sheridan's moment in it was when that age, after a short breathing-space, renewed a conflict with the very conventions that formed its atmosphere. He witnessed the first and last acts of the French Revolution: we are still writing its epilogue. He lived when oligarchs hired talent, and extreme poverty was barely audible: we are deafened by a babel. In habit Sheridan belonged to his period, but in affinity he is often a modern. His speeches read like modern speeches; his plays hold modern audiences. He stands at the parting of the ways, and bridges over the past and present,

> "Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born."

Without a bird's-eye review of some contemporary phases it would be impossible to rank his qualities in a right perspective. The symmetry of the Georgians, like that of Sheridan, is on the surface. Between us and them a great gulf is fixed, and it is

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idle to think of presenting their network of queer alleys as an even length of modern boulevard.

2. Their era was in many respects what would now be styled provincial, but what might better be termed suburban. Provincialism, indeed, as Ruskin has pointed out, is the parent of all great art,[1] and art abounded in the eighteenth century—but the provincial soon succumbed to the suburban. Cleverness tyrannised over creativeness, and ornament over originality. For nigh fifty years a general *feu d'artifice* prevailed. The well-to-do sought their *villeggiatura* within a driving distance from town, and big demesnes studded all the home counties. There was almost a horror of the remote country, whose inhabitants were considered—and alas! often were—little better than savages. Though it proved, throughout, an age of strong individualities, Lilliput was long in the ascendant. It was the reign of the little-great and the trim-picturesque, of the toy-classical, of stucco and of lacquer. The state-causes before Sheridan was born had been commercial, the Court causes had been the hereditary broils between the King and the Prince, the waning Jacobitism which both rendered less romantic, and the miserly Hanoverianism which, said Chesterfield, made "the crown of three kingdoms shrivel under an electoral cap." The square houses and stiff gardens mirrored the prosaic elegance of *coteries* which starved and sneered at enthusiasm of every description, which extolled "reason," which, on a lower plane, marred reputations by gossiping satire or made them by trenchancy and sleight-of-hand. These features lingered from the middle age of the pigmy-giant Pope, to the old age of the giant-pigmy Horace Walpole, who cavilled at Mrs. Siddons as not "mannered" enough for an actress,[2] and sneered at Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer" as vulgar. Grimace enchanted, and Walpole himself lived through all its hybrid phases—

[1] "The Art of England, Lectures given in Oxford," p. 250.

[2] Walpole also wrote: "St. Paul is my model for letter-writing, who, being a man of fashion, is very unaffected and never studies for what he shall say, but in one paragraph takes care of Timothy's soul, and in the next of his own cloak."

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the daring affectations of the Herveys, the later and punier postures of Jekyll, the beginnings of Luttrell.[1] And society luxuriated also in "that affected simplicity which is a refined imposture." Artificial hermitages were the mode, a fashion set by poetasters like Shenstone and Hayley. Sheridan's sister has described one of these designed by Gainsborough's cross-grained patron, Thicknesse, in the purlieus of Bath. He had buried his young daughter in an ivied cave close to the house, approached by a miniature grove and surmounted by sculpture. Above the tomb a figure of "Il Penseroso" guarded a tiny urn inscribed with inappropriate lines from Pope. Thicknesse, acting as cicerone to a party of laughing girls, sauntered past it with unconcern. It was no more to him than any other apparatus. Even in the next generation, one of its minor poets was overheard on the approach of company (and patrons were still the hop-poles of poets) directing in a stage whisper that the cascade should be turned on immediately, the sheep-bells be tuned, and the missal opened in the cell.

3. But in those Georgian pleasaunces rose forest oaks as well as fantastic shrubs. Such was Chatham, "*clarum et venerabile nomen*," whose very name as it struck the air caused patriotism to vibrate and invigorated a people till once more it felt itself a nation. Heroism revived not only in the brave defenders of Great Britain, but afterwards in her unselfish defier, Lord Edward Fitzgerald. By degrees a reaction set in. Nature reasserted her rights and stunted enthusiasm took its revenge. Romance had begun to glow again in the impassioned thrill of Burke's rhetoric and in the golden haze of Gainsborough's landscapes. It is this contrast indeed between nature and artifice, between grain and veneer, that inspires the "School for Scandal," and forms the unique charm of the Georgian epoch.

[1] For the former cf. the "Rolliad" ("Political Eclogues," Jekyll)

"Ranging with fell virtú his poisonous tribes
Of embryo sneers and animalcule gibes,
Here insect puns their feeble wings expand,
To speed in little flights their lord's command
There in their paper chrysalis he sees
Specks of *bon mots* and eggs of repartees."

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The prelude to the French Revolution, and its European sequels resulted in an orgy of enthusiasm. Then indeed enthusiasm ran riot among the villa-parterres and statues, oddity took violent forms, and the French *carmagnole* grew contagious. The most frigid, even the Whig magnates, played with the fire and were whirled in the fury of the frolic. Blue-stockings gave way to mænads, and witlings to agitators. Pampered gallomaniacs fancied that they had returned to "Nature," when in fact the simple life was far from their longings. They craved the delight without the struggle, and the result was a sort of slovenly *fête-champêtre*. They affected the primitive, and pretended to leap over the barriers of civilisation, but really it was its discipline that galled them. Everything seemed possible, nobody was ashamed. Enthusiasm, flushed with hope, and breathless with desire, galloped, as it were, along the highroads, calling everywhere on order and authority to stand and deliver.

This orgy subsided, and the commonplace revived. But a few years separate the seditious dancers at Devonshire House, with bandeaux, mottoes and attitudes, from the professional talkers at the sober dinner-table whence Lady Holland would despatch them to ferret out politics, while she taught her page to swing Persian incense after dinner and her butler to thrum and warble Italian airs on the guitar;[1] or from the tame patronage of the Lansdownes, who were sorry to part from Mr. Moore because he would have made the evenings pass more agreeably for them in foreign hotels. But the Regency was a reign of the airs divorced from the graces, and none knew this better than Sheridan's friend, Lady Cork, who was a gifted girl when George the Third ascended the throne and survived, a centre of distinction, till the third year of Queen Victoria.

4. One pervading element, however, distinguishes all this intoxication from similar ferments. The first part of this rationalistic period had been trenchant, the last proved sentimental also. That note, it is true, had been sounded earlier

[1] *Teste* Moore, "Journal," Vol. II., p. 311.

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by Richardson, and reverberated in France.[1] Yet Richardson (the close friend of Sheridan's mother) was a miniaturist who shared in the smallness that preceded the American War. His moral and almost allegorical sentimentality was off the rough highroads along which the optimist Fielding and the pessimist Smollett sent their animal man fighting and adventuring; it was coddled and secluded for the pious approval of Mrs. Carter and the old-maiden muses at Tunbridge Wells. He took the baby passions on his knees and dandled them in full view of the elect. "Sweet humanity," exclaims his Grandison, taking Pamela's handkerchief to kiss as he wipes away her tears, "charming sensibility, check not the kindly gush, dewdrops of heaven . . . from a mind mild and gracious." And in like stilted sentiments Burns himself afterwards apostrophised his "Clarinda."[2] But Rousseau it was who first made sentimentalism active by associating it with revolution,[3] while in welding together emotion and "reason," he heralded the modern era. Sterne, adopting Rousseau's sentimentality, æstheticised it. The son of an Irish subaltern, an incomparable impressionist and an incorrigible vagrant in the by-paths of feeling, he gave it a gipsy face which he veiled with the gossamer

[1] Diderot wrote of Richardson, "Peintre du cœur humain, c'est toi seul qui ne ments jamais." And in 1797 Beaumarchais quotes this with approbation in the preface to his "La Mère Coupable." In 1764 the future author of "Figaro" told his father, who was a passionate admirer of "Clarissa Harlowe," "Je suis un peu comme *votre bonne amie* Miss Howe qui quand elle avait bien du chagrin, pleurait en riant, ou riait en pleurant." Cf. Loménie's "Beaumarchais," Vol. I., p. 32.

[2] Burns' sentimentality was epicurean: "O Clarinda, shall we not meet in a state . . . where the lavish hand of plenty shall minister to the highest wish of Benevolence, and where the chill north wind of Prudence shall never blow over the flowery fields of enjoyment?" This sounds rather like Sheridan's "Pizarro." In another letter Burns said that he envied "two creatures—the wild horse in the forests of Asia, and the oyster on the desert shores of Europe—one has no wish without enjoyment, the other neither wish nor fear."

[3] Rousseauism, however, was practically adopted by Louis XVI. himself, when he issued a proclamation in support of the French aid to America, in which he stated that the Americans did not possess a degree of freedom which "all mankind were entitled to by nature."

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threads of his titillating style. From 1769, when "Tristram Shandy" appeared, Pierrot becomes domiciled in England,[1] and Pierrot, once more, is a suburban who is always escaping from his cottage to the town. After Sterne, sentimentality went into hysterics till we reach the prattling Della Cruscans and the bathos of Mackenzie's consumptive "Man of Feeling," who outdid Grandison when he kissed off a child's tears as they flowed, "and wept between every kiss." In that interval, however, even Dr. Johnson was not proof against the spasm. "You shall not hide Mrs. —— from me," he tells Mrs. Thrale, "for if she be a feeler, I can bear feeling as well as you; and I hope that in tenderness for what she feels from nature, I am able to forgive or forget what she feels from affectation."[2] The "Saints" themselves made a luxury of feeling. "Forster dined with us," writes Wilberforce. "He more and more gains on me—mentioned that his first *impression* was from seeing a poor manufacturer praying with his children. *They turned out ill, while Forster was brought to it by God.*"[3] The tirades of Sheridan's Falkland and Julia, or Pizarro, were not restricted to men of letters; they pervaded every form of expression. The great Chatham thus scathed the employment of Canadian savages in the American War. "Who is the man that in addition to the disgraces and mischiefs of war, has dared to authorise and associate to our arms the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the savage? to call into civilised alliance the wild and inhuman inhabitants of the woods?—to delegate to the merciless Indian the defence of disputed rights, and to wage the horrors of this barbarous war against our brethren?" It is difficult now to realise that the sentimental outbursts of "The Rivals" were wept over in the theatres and were the most popular portion of

[1] It may be mentioned that as early as 1740 Sterne uses the word "sentimental" in one of his letters.

[2] "Piozzi Letters," Vol. II., p. 82. Phrases like "full of feels" are quite common in letters of this period. Mrs. Sheridan says this about her sister Jane.

[3] "Life of Wilberforce," Vol. I., p. 367. This same Forster in 1786 acknowledged his great debt in preaching to the "precepts" of Sheridan's father. Cf. "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan,' p. 365.

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the play,[1] nor will it be forgotten that "The Tears of Sensibility" and "The Sentimental Journey" stood on Lydia's bookshelf. Though Sheridan mocked at the perversions of "sensibility," though taste weighed more with him than passion, he revelled in sentimentalism, and we know not only that these passages had to be abridged, but also that stage exigencies alone prevented him from introducing long love-passages into "The School for Scandal."[2] But within forty years the tone had indeed altered, for in 1812 Madame de Staël could exclaim that Ward was the sole man of sentiment in England,[3] and Ward was the politician of whom Samuel Rogers sang:

> "Ward has no heart, they say, but I deny it;
> He has a heart, and—gets his speeches by it."

Sheridan added to the "Pierrotism" of his dreamier side the trenchancy with which his period had started—the side of adroit alertness which relates him to Harlequin-Charles Townshend. Beaumarchais — "the revolution already in action"—has summed up something of both aspects in the irony of his Figaro, the sentimental adventurer who laughs and cries at the same moment. Figaro is far removed from the Scapin of Molière. He is morbid and introspective like Sheridan, part of whose career seems prophesied in pieces of his famous monologue. "They discuss," Figaro muses, "'tis you, 'tis he, 'tis I, 'tis thou. No, 'tis not we. Ah! who is it, then? Strange tangle of circumstance! How has the chain come by its many links? . . . Forced to run a road which I entered without knowing, as I shall leave it without wishing, I have scattered over it as many flowers as my gaiety has allowed. Once more, 'my gaiety,' I say, without knowing if that belongs to me any more than the rest, nor even what that 'me' is,

[1] Cf. Smyth's "Memoir," p. 7.

[2] Sheridan himself said so to Rogers. Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 191 (where the reason is mentioned), and Moore's "Life," Vol. I., p. 249.

[3] Cf. "Memoirs and Times of George IV." (Colburn, 1838 [edited by Galton]), Vol. I., p. 22.

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on which I am centred: a formless rallying ground of unascertained atoms, now a shy, retiring dunce, now a sportive young animal, now an eager youth of pleasure with every taste for enjoyments and every contrivance to obtain them . . . ambitious by vanity, industrious by necessity, but indolent—steeped in exquisites. Orator when danger wakes me, poet in *negligé*, musician at hazard, a lover of the comic stage. I have seen everything, done, used everything, and now the illusion is shattered. . . . Suzon, Suzon, of what torments are you the cause!"

5. It was an age of orators and actors. "The whole world knows," urged Sheridan with truth in a speech on the proposed Irish Union, "the whole world knows that never was there a period when fine speeches more powerfully affected the public, and never a time when, from fancied security or habitual indifference, the public appeared less eager profoundly to examine any question."[1] Men waited up whole nights to hear Pitt and Fox embody two sides with a rhetoric that confessedly lent the semblance of reason to passion or prejudice. To the "magic wand," as Pitt termed it, of Sheridan's eloquence belongs the rare distinction of having changed the votes of more than one member of Parliament.[2] The voice of the people was only half-born, and the House of Commons was the theatre of the country. Indeed, its lobbies were a green-room where men sat up till five in the morning on the chance of hearing one of the protagonists, members as well as reporters took notes of the speeches, and great ladies anxiously awaited the result of the performance.[3] The dramatic aspect of debate was

[1] "Sheridan's Speeches," Vol. III., p. 287 (January 31, 1799).

[2] Logan's, Drake's, and others, in February, 1787.

[3] Cf. Sheridan MSS., Tickell Corr.: "You heard, I suppose, that Lady Chatham, Lady Temple, and the Duchess of Rutland and two or three others were in an adjoining room anxiously waiting the division and asking every common man they saw, 'Well, sir, how do you think it will go? Who's up now?'" Mrs. Tickell to her sister (summer?), 1784. There are many allusions to members taking notes. Mrs. Tickell, in a letter of 1784, says that her young brother Ozias was taken by her husband to a debate and mistook the members taking notes for "the editors." In the Sheridan

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heightened by the conflicts and contrasts of events and characters. Pitt and Fox, the King and the Prince, played leading parts in a series of struggles both personal and national, culminating perpetually in startling *dénouement* and climax. And just as Sheridan was a master of dialogue on the stage, so he became a master of dialectic in the senate. People looked to him for keen criticism and comic relief, as well as for eloquent declamation in the many acts of a long and melodramatic reign.

6. It was a demonstrative time in England, one of capitals, italics and notes of exclamation, one far more theatrical than has been supposed. Tears did not go out of publicity till 1808, when the surtout came into fashion and the eighteenth century may be said to have died. For some forty years they were cultivated in both Houses, where they were as common as the Latin quotations. Burke wept when Fox praised him in 1790, and Fox wept at Burke's irrevocable farewell from his friend and pupil in the following year. Fox indeed was an inveterate weeper on political emergencies. Tears trickled down the fat cheeks of this spoiled child of fifty in 1799, when he hurried up for two days from his Arcadian self-exile in the vain hopes of at length defeating Pitt. Fox and Burke were emotional, but Pitt, the unruffled, wept also, "pressing his hat upon his brow," when the vote impeaching his beloved Lord Melville was recorded. He wept again when the same incident led to his last rupture with Addington, while yet a third example is furnished by his niece.[1] The stiff Elliot (afterwards Lord Minto) sometimes "felt the bone choke in his throat"[2] at others' eloquence, and once even at his own—that dull speech

MSS. is a record that Burgess, Sheridan's friend, and a powerful political go-between, had notes taken by Burke, and this has been confirmed to the writer by one of his descendants. Tutor Smyth sat up till the small hours to hear the great speakers.

[1] Lady Hester Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 230.

[2] Mrs. Tickell, in a letter of 1785, says of her stoical father's emotion, that "although he was not troubled with as exquisite feelings as some, yet he could not help feeling sometimes a lump rise in his throat." Sheridan MSS.

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on the Impey charge which, he declared, "had the honour of squeezing tears from several." Calm Macpherson, of Indian celebrity, frequently shed them. So did Jenkinson, "the shadow behind the throne," who aired his handkerchief for the purpose. Even the dry Barré wept to hear Burke's denunciations of Red Indian levies in the American War, and the unemotional Powys over Fox's bickerings with Pitt. In 1789 the browbeating and beetle-browed Thurlow—"None could be so wise as Thurlow looked," said Fox—did the same, protesting sham loyalty from the woolsack—"iron tears down Pluto's cheek," mocked Burke, "tears for bread." And in the preceding autumn the solemn Chancellor actually went into hysterics at the sight of his master's madness. The stoical Lord Eldon (what a picture!) sometimes indulged in this melting mood. Great and stormy speeches were always drawing the downpour. Sheridan's friend Richardson sobbed over his display in Westminster Hall, while Sheridan's wife and Mrs. Siddons both swooned at Burke's invectives against Warren Hastings. On the same occasion the whole assembly cried aloud on hearing him and Fox. Even Burke's printed praise of the Catholics evoked tears in the reading. Sheridan himself burst into tears in full sight of an audience when he saw his father (to whom he was as yet unreconciled) present with his sisters at a performance of "The Duenna."[1] The heir apparent, during his colloquies with Fox about Mrs. Fitzherbert, literally broke down, for he rolled on the carpet. In his shifts to win her he gashed himself with knives like a priest of Baal, and threatened suicide like Mr. Mantalini. And when at last he wedded the luckless Caroline, he was actually seen tearing his hair in the gardens of Carlton House. To crown all, his august father wept on the neck of the impassive Duke of Portland over the tyranny of the coalition.[2]

[1] Cf. Moore's "Life of Sheridan," Vol. I., p. 167.

[2] For some of the foregoing particulars cf. (*inter multa alia*) Lord John Russell's "Life and Times of Fox," Vol. III., p. 192; Vol. II., p. 166, and *passim*; Lord Holland's "Memoirs of the Whig Party," Fox's Corr.; and Wraxall, *passim*; Minto, "Life and Letters," Vol. I., p. 179; for Jenkinson,

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In the theatre tears are not so surprising, but they fell there in waterfalls. Garrick, when he bade farewell to Drury Lane, paused till a gush of them relieved him, while when Mrs. Siddons made her second appearance on its boards, Sheridan's father and the whole house sobbed and cried aloud. The Siddons often drew tears from Burke, as he tells us in his "Reflections on the Revolution in France."[1] Fox, once more, sitting in the orchestra to be nearer the same *tragédienne*, on one occasion bedewed the instruments; and when Sheridan senior returned in 1756 to the Dublin theatre from which party rancour had driven him, "tears gushed from the eyes of several of his male auditors."[2] As for gesticulation, there never was a time when the approved Adelphi tap on the chest was more in evidence. Burke's dagger-scene in 1792, when he threw down a Birmingham weapon on the floor of the House to point his hatred of the Jacobins, is familiar. But Burke also kept pressing Elliot's hand at a dinner-party to mark his rapture over a speech; and he may almost be said to have aired a knack of catching speakers in his arms, for not only Sheridan experienced the compliment, but Elliot also,[3] a fact which must have lessened Sheridan's pleasure. Burke again had literally to be dragged down to his seat by Fox and Sheridan when infuriated by criticisms on his conduct in reinstating the corrupt officials,

"Walpole's Corr.," Vol. I., p. 171; Butler's "Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 77; for Pitt, cf. "Life of Lord Sidmouth," Vol. II., p. 373; Lady H. Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 73 (where she says she only saw him weep twice, though she adds another instance afterwards), and Vol. III., p. 172; and, generally, cf. Caro's "Fin de Dixhuitième Siècle," and Lecky's "History of the Eighteenth Century." Another instance of the Prince's tears is given in our second volume. For Thurlow, cf. "The Manuscript Diary of the Duchess of Devonshire," transcribed in the Appendix; and Prior's "Life of Burke," p. 309. About Thurlow some unknown verses may be cited from "The Senator" (1772):

> "Long since has Dullness charitably shed
> Her drowsiest poppies on her Thurlow's head;
> Long since bestowed that density of skull
> Broad as unthinking, logically dull!"

[1] Cf. "Works," Vol. II., p. 353.

[2] "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," p. 75.

[3] Cf. Minto, "Life and Letters," Vol. I., p. 219.

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Powell and Bembridge. No one had less command of his passions or overdid his violence more than Burke. In 1778 he flung a book of estimates at the Treasury bench, knocked down a candle, and injured Welbore Ellis's shins. Two years later, aiding Fox at the Westminster election and indignant at insinuations that he was a "Papist," he responded to cries of "Tip him the long oath" by kissing the book and then hurling it at the populace. On another occasion, when a phlegmatic member objected to his rising in the House with a huge bundle of papers, on the score that he was going to exhaust both them and his audience, the same orator, suffocated with rage, became speechless, and actually ran out of the House; it was on this occasion that George Selwyn observed that "A lion had been put to flight by the braying of an ass."[1] Nor was attitudinising restricted to scenes like these. The notorious Duchess of Kingston (Foote's "Lady Kitty Crocodile"), parading her pomp and grievances all along the Bath Road, was carried at night to her inn kicking and screaming; while grand ladies, aided by the tight-lacing, went into continual swoons. Even as late as at Nelson's obsequies a Miss Bayne actually died of hysterics.[2] Macaronis in 1773, the year of their birth,[3] ran gorgeous races in Kensington Gardens on Sunday evenings, belles posed as dairymaids, gave "Cossack dances" in which they wore uniforms, and sometimes masqueraded as men to hear great debates in the House of Commons.[4] The beaux followed suit, and Jack Willett-Payne,

[1] Cf. McCormick's "Memoirs of Burke" (1797), pp. 248, 249; and also for the election incident, "History of the Westminster Election" (1784), p. 253.

[2] Cf. "Annual Register, Chronicle," p. 506.

[3] In this year and for the twelve following they were caricatured in every variety from the court to the racecourse. One of the later date represents the Bengal Nabob dandified and dancing a minuet; another represents "Prince Florizel" surveying himself in a mirror.

[4] Cf. the instance of the second Mrs. Sheridan in order to hear her husband's great speech on the Additional Forces Bill in June, 1804 (Minto, "Life and Letters," Vol. III., p. 348). Among other instances, the Duchess of Gordon, I think, once did the same.

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the Prince's secretary, attended Mrs. Sturt's fancy ball dressed as a young lady, and "chaperoned" by Mrs. Fitzherbert.[1]

7. It was a moist age and the wine associated itself with the tears. More gout was manufactured in this century than in any other, and from its outset, to quote Congreve, its heroes were fellows, "whom the flood could not wash away."[2] Folks were always gormandising and swilling, sometimes for eight hours on end. The very ladies at balls drank port and even porter with their lobsters.[3] The business of Great Britain was transacted over oceans of liquor and continents of food. As we read, we long to open the windows of those hot dining-rooms and to let the fumes of surfeit escape. Leigh Hunt, who waxes over-righteous in his estimate of Sheridan, remarks that he was only in earnest when he was drinking.[4] This is untrue, and misbeseems one whose political cause Sheridan served, and who, notwithstanding fine taste and good qualities, was himself both ungrateful and affected. Sheridan, in his original manuscript of "The School for Scandal," has scribbled opposite to the opening of the third scene of the third act, "Wine brings out Nature." But his inner attitude towards the bottle was

[1] (1784) Minto, "Life and Letters," Vol. I., p. 325. Mrs. Sheridan went to this ball dressed as a gipsy. Her sister-in-law, Elizabeth Sheridan, wrote that she "unmasked very soon." ". . . About one the Prince of Wales and Duke of Clarence arrived, dressed as Highland chiefs; nothing could be more elegant or becoming than their dress. The Prince came up to Mrs. S. to inquire for Dick. . . . After supper the Prince proposed to Mrs. S. to join him in a trio, which she did at once. . . . The Prince proposed a couple more, and then gave over for fear of tiring Mrs. S. He has a good voice, and I think I never saw Mrs. S. look handsomer." LeFanu MSS., cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 195.

[2] "Love for Love," Act V., Sc. II. Congreve also wrote:

"Let Apollo's example invite us,
For he's drunk every night,
And that makes him so bright
That he's able next morning to light us."

[3] Mrs. Tickell chronicles this fact as an ordinary occurrence at a ball near Hampton Court, where she lived. "Plenty of Porto and Bono Lisbono." Sheridan MSS., Tickell Corr.

[4] Cf. his "Critical and Biographical Sketch," prefacing his edition of "Sheridan's Dramatic Works" (Moxon, 1840).

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not that of Charles Surface. He called it a "vile habit . . . never to be excused," though in his case to be palliated perhaps by constitutional causes.[1] He twice nearly subdued it, yet it gained on him by leaps and bounds after his first wife's death, and at length became as necessary for his displays as it had been for "Hudibras"-Butler's, of whom the Duke of Buckingham said that he was "like a ninepin, small at both ends, but great in the middle." He had temperate periods and spasms of total abstinence.[2] Yet that same drinking habit to which Sheridan yielded under repeated protest, seemed a badge of manhood, and was the commonplace of a time when the young and irreproachable Grey "drank more than any of them," when even Wilberforce, in his unregenerate days, sometimes exceeded, when Wellington drank hard in his youth, when "Diddy," the Protestant Duke of Norfolk, would lie down in his bouts on logs of wood in the street till he was taken for dead, when Speaker Cornwall[3] sat

[1] ". . . I have never done a base or dishonest act. I have never omitted to do a kind, a generous, or a benevolent one when I had the power. But sins of omission—ah, me!—senseless credulity, destructive procrastination, unworthy indolence, all abetted by one vile habit, somewhat, perhaps, to be palliated by an original infirmity of constitution—an occasional and unaccountable dejection of spirits without a cause, and a constant inability to sleep, but never to be excused." From a late letter to his second wife. Sheridan MSS. (Also cited by Mr. F. Rae, Vol. II., p. 222.)

[2] Sheridan MSS. For Sheridan's need in his latter years of being "warmed with wine" to "display his admirable powers in company," cf. Rogers' "Table-Talk," p. 69: "During the earlier part of dinner he was generally heavy and silent; and I have heard him, when invited to drink a glass of wine, reply, 'No, thank you, I'll take a little small beer.' After dinner, when he had had a tolerable quantity of wine, he was brilliant indeed, but when he went on swallowing too much he became downright stupid." We know from his letters to his second wife how strenuously he fought against excess, giving up wine altogether for intervals. In 1806, when he was taken ill, "it required persuasion to make him drink six small glasses." Cf. Creevey, Vol. I., p. 84. Yet in the July of this very year, at a dinner-party of his own, "he seemed fuddled at the beginning and drunk at the end." Cf. Minto, "Life and Letters," Vol. III., p. 397; and by 1804 Lady Bessborough wrote that he was so constantly (Holland House MSS.).

[3] Minto, "Life and Letters," Vol. I., p. 189. "Fox drinks what I should call a great deal, . . . Sheridan excessively, and Grey more than any of

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barricaded by pints of porter, a president in keeping with his rubicund subjects. These remained sometimes till seven in the morning rejoicing in the flow of soul and spirits, while the keen draught played havoc with their heated bodies.[1]

> "There Speaker Cornwall sits, and oh, unhappy fate,
> Must sit for ever through the long debate.
> Like sad Prometheus fastened to the rock,
> In vain he looks for pity to the clock,
> In vain the effect of strengthening porter tries
> And nods to Bellamy for fresh supplies."[2]

This hard drinking did not die out nearly so soon as the tears which mix with the port-stains on the paper. Long afterwards, when a pious lady offered Theodore Hook a tract headed "Three words to a Drunkard," "Oh, yes, of course, I know," was the rejoinder—"Pass the bottle."

We are not of course to suppose that the wine-bibbers were perpetually drunk: they were no sots, but they were not exactly sober. Sheridan, summer by summer frolicsome at Crewe Hall, at Chatsworth, at Wynnstay and at other great houses, must not be imagined as reeling from one to the other. Neither Mrs. Sheridan nor Mrs. Tickell (who notes it in her husband) ever mention this failing in the orator; it cannot in those earlier years have been flagrant. Decorum was observed, and there was a time, and plenty of it, for everything. Readers of "Pendennis" will recall Lady Agnes Foker's memories of her father playing macao and hasard with Mr. Fox at Brooks's till nine o'clock in the morning, and of his hopes to see the late Dr. Johnson at Drummington, "only Dr. Johnson died."

them." So late as 1810, if Creevey may be trusted, he "came in drunk from the Duke of York's." Cf. Creevey, "Papers," Vol. I., p. 123. For Wellington, cf. Lady H. Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 293; and for the Duke of Norfolk, Wraxall, Vol. III., p. 362.

[1] Pitt termed it "Siberian," and complained that the cold wind cut through his silk stockings. Cf. Lady H. Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. II., p. 74.

[2] "Rolliad," p. 68. Bellamy was "Deputy-Housekeeper" (chief of the lower staff) in the House of Commons. His salary was only £400 a year, though it was drawn from ten heads. But he eked it out by being a purveyor of the best wines only, and charging ten shillings for a bottle of claret and

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"Yes, and Mr. Sheridan came over and drank a great deal of wine—everybody drank a great deal of wine in those days—and papa's wine-merchant's bill was ten times as much as Erith's is, who gets it as he wants it from Fortnum and Mason's." When George III. told a moderate friend that he had heard he was fond of a glass of wine, "There, sir, they wrong me," he replied; "I am fond of a whole bottle."

There are stories on stories of Sheridan's great feats after big bumpers, sometimes of brandy, though during his Warren Hastings effort he fasted and restricted himself to water. In a letter to Lady Bessborough describing a debate at the opening of the new century, "I am half drunk," he concluded, "and can write no more, perhaps had better not have written half so much." Dr. Bain, his physician for the last twenty-five years of his life, being summoned one morning, found him in a high fever, but was assured by the butler that his master on the preceding night had drunk "nothing particular, only two bottles of port."[1]

Sheridan was thrown early with Fox, who could vie with the imperturbable Dundas in his potations, and then read Homer, or gamble at Brooks's, or rattle the dice-box at Crockford's, with a fresh set of more seasoned roysterers. But the highly-strung Sheridan coped ill with such competitors, and succumbed sooner than topers like Dundas or soakers like Pitt. Pitt, usually a solitary drinker, once driving home with that friend from Hollwood, settled a score for seven bottles at an inn on the Old Kent Road, and Pitt offended by doing what Sheridan's nice taste would never have suffered, when he stood holding the door open of "Solomon's Porch" while he was ill, with a

eight for one of port. At this period the Clerk of the House was in receipt of ten thousand a year. Some of the subordinate officers accepted "tips" from the members. Cf. Mr. Williams's article on the "Officers of the House of Commons" in *Blackwood's Magazine* for March, 1909.

[1] Dr. Bain's own statement to Moore. Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 281. The Lady Bessborough letter forms part of the new series in the Appendix, Vol. II. Much earlier, when Sheridan had sprained his foot, Tickell guessed it was gout, and recommended him "patience and claret." Cf. Sheridan MSS., Tickell Corr., Mrs. Tickell to Mrs. Sheridan, 1785.

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full House for witnesses.[1] "He was observed," said the *Morning Chronicle*, "in walking to his carriage after a Canterbury Corporation banquet" (during September, 1792) "to oscillate like his own *bills*." Twice at least in his speeches did Pitt draw metaphors from drink;[2] and he once exclaimed of the assistant clerk, who told the Speaker that Mr. Pitt's exhibition on the previous evening had given him a violent headache, "That is an excellent arrangement. Let me have the wine, and the clerk the headache."[3] Erskine too never pleaded a cause without a small flask of madeira in his pocket. Dundas and Thurlow drank port; Fox, champagne and burgundy; Sheridan, first claret, then port, latterly rack-punch, hot negus, brandy, and eventually port again; Wilkes alone drank hock (as Boswell did later), and Burke, who began with a modicum of claret, ended by copious draughts of hot water, though in earlier days he had once assured the Speaker, "I am not well; I eat too much, I drink too much, and I sleep very little."[4] Pitt's last phase was port and water, and most of these drank less as they grew older, but Sheridan, alas! more. Strong drink however never tempted the good King, whose madness in 1788 was preceded by indulgence in "a pear and water." Monarch "Georgy Boy" too was nearly as great a tea-drinker as Dr. Johnson. And he was also bitten by the coffee-mania. In 1778 he careered about English

[1] In February, 1783, during Fox's speech on Shelburne's refusal to resign. Cf. "Life of Wilberforce," Vol. I., p. 26. The door was behind the Speaker's chair. Cf., too, among many allusions to Pitt's drinking, the "Rolliad," p. 36.

[2] "Opinions imbibed as well as matured," in a speech of June 13, 1786, on Warren Hastings, and his last onslaught on Sheridan (which prompted a famous caricature) in January, 1805. Cf. Stanhope's "Pitt," Vol. IV., p. 260; and for the first, Wraxall, Vol. IV., p. 337.

[3] "Life of Lord Sidmouth," Vol. I., p. 149. Addington would say, "Now, Pitt, you shall not have another drop," "but Pitt generally became importunate, promising that if a fresh bottle were brought he would only take one glass."

[4] Cf. Stanhope's "Life," Vol. IV., p. 346, and Russell's "Fox," Vol. III., p. 351. For Erskine, cf. a note in an exceedingly rare pamphlet, "Epistle from R—d Br-ns-y Sh...d-n, Esqre., to the Right Honourable H-n-y D-nd-s. London, J. Owen, 1796."

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country houses, tippling in teacups while Ireland burned in the flames of crisis.[1] The Prince of Wales, on the other hand, drank everything till everything palled, and his cloyed palate had to decline on curaçoa and "cedrato." His constant excesses brought on his constant fevers, and on one occasion Sheridan dared his displeasure by pulling the bottle away from him.[2] Porson, the greatest scholar of his age, and as unmethodical as Sheridan, was so dependent on stimulants, that he once consumed a bottle of methylated spirits under the impression that it was gin. Nor was the cloth exempt. The Duchess of Devonshire records that a clergyman invited to Chatsworth arrived intoxicated and had to be expelled for his gross behaviour to Lady Elizabeth Foster and a friend.[3] Wives were not ashamed to chronicle that their spouses returned to them in the small hours, "pretty drunk, pretty cold and pretty cross," or to relate how they were kept awake all night by the sound "of every cruel pop of that odious five shilling claret in the pantry."[4] Angelo describes a bout at which the

[1] Cf. the Bishop of Derry's letter (August 5, 1778), "The Two Duchesses," p. 58.

[2] Sheridan MSS. This happened at Bootle's ball of 1789, and is recited by Sheridan's sister Elizabeth to his eldest sister, Mrs. LeFanu: "Mrs. Sheridan told me a little circumstance that happened at Bootle's that shews the footing he [Sheridan] is on. The Prince, in the fullness of his joy at his brother'r safety, [the Duke of York's after his duel provoked by his mother] had taken rather too many bumpers to his health. Someone told my brother that they feared he was setting in for drinking, and desired he would try to get him away. He accordingly went up to him; he did not read[lly] yield to persuasion; he pushed the bottle away from him, saying, 'You *shall* not drink any more.' The Prince, fired at the idea of controul, said, 'Sheridan, I love you better than anyone, but *shall not* is what I can't put up with.' However, with the help of the Conways, they got him away, and no doubt H.R.H. was thankful next morning for having been prevented from giving a handle to his enemies for encreasing their abuse." (Also cited by Rae.) The Prince later "became also a confirmed glutton, and was once rescued from imminent death when his friends found him extended on his bed, with his face, *black* from excess, dangling over the bedside." Cf. Huish, "Memoirs of George IV."

[3] The Duchess to her mother, September 23—26, 1784. Devonshire House MSS. (Also printed in the *Anglo-Saxon Review* for September, 1899.)

[4] Sheridan MSS., Tickell Corr. (1785); the last instance comes from a

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Prince and the Duke of Sussex were present from eight at night till two in the morning. The Duke never ceased calling out "Look to the heel-taps," the "quick firing" of mixed wines continued without intermission, and the guest only escaped its effects by his constancy to old hock from the soup to the dessert.[1] As for the Bohemians and the "literary cyarkers," as Captain Costigan terms them, they were always waiting for something or somebody to turn up, and employing the interval in wrangling or being reconciled in their countless clubs and taverns, the weirdest of which (among all their varieties) was the terrible "Two-in-the-morning," a ghastly conclave of wizened hell-rakes in an exceptional assembly which presented the appearance of a Dance of Death.[2] But as a rule their bond of union was the "alcohol of human kindness." The bumper healed quarrels nearly as often as it provoked them. As Sheridan sang in "The Duenna," in a ditty long popular:

> "A bumper of good liquor
> Will end a contest quicker
> Than Justice, Judge, or Vicar;
> So fill a cheerful glass
> And let good humour pass."

Kemble, who waxed majestic as he grew mellower, once flung a decanter at Sheridan, and then immediately shook hands. It is hard to understand precisely what Sheridan means when

letter to her sister of September, 1784, when J. Townshend and young North kept wassail with Tickell at Hampton Court till five in the morning, "tho' I entreated Tickell to think of to-night's fatigue for me and let them go; but 'twas all in vain, for the instant my back was turned, off they marched into the other room, with their bottles and glasses, and ordered Stephen to bring the fire after them, so at least they had the grace to think of not disturbing me." The instance of Porson happened at Hoppner's. The artist declared that he could give him no strong drink. Porson felt confident that Mrs. Hoppner (who was absent) had a bottle in hiding, went to her room, and swallowed the potion described in the text. Byron was disgusted with the grossness of Porson's tipsiness.

[1] Cf. Angelo's "Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 12. This was so late as 1806 at the Neapolitan Club, which included Sir William Hamilton, and where, on a later occasion, Moore records that he met Sheridan.

[2] For this awful and truly Hogarthian scene, cf. Bernard's "Retrospections," Vol. II., p. 222.

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he makes his Charles Surface regret that drinking was on the wane. He specifies guzzling and its antidote spa-water, as he had previously specified "acids and small whey"; but he probably also pointed at the valetudinarian craze which sent the rheumatic to mud-baths, and the exhausted to magnetism. It is still harder to realise—and contemporaries wondered—what wit and good-fellowship, what inspiration and reward for inspiration, as Sheridan once said of "a glass of good wine," hovered round and redeemed these debauches, or the strength of the constitutions which survived them, when only four hours' sleep was compatible with good health, good looks and good spirits. The number of lives which such men led is extraordinary, though the slowness of communication afforded a spacious leisure unknown to the swirling haste of to-day. Nor is it less curious to watch how the carousers of one night became the diverting innocents of the next; how in the case of Sheridan, for instance, when Hannah More met him at Garrick's in 1778, "These great geniuses sit up till midnight playing at cross-purposes, crooked answers, and what's my thought like. You never heard a set of wits utter half so much nonsense."[1] The vices of men were coupled to the spirits of children, and parliamentary athletes romped like boys. Burke was an

[1] "Memoirs of Hannah More," p. 61. In another letter she says: "The Sheridans were of the party and, need I say, embellished it?" A set of these "What is my thought like" verses on "Why is Mrs. Sheridan like a cat?" has been attributed to Sheridan by Mr. Rae. (Cf. his "Sheridan," Vol. II., p. 116.) But they are signed "Garrick" in the album kept by Mrs. Sheridan at Harrow and containing many verses of an earlier date: it was being offered for sale in 1908. They run as follows:

"The simile is plain and pat,
Why is Cecilia like a cat?
Whene'er she pleases to be purring,
All's silent, not a mouse is stirring;
Whenever both with love are smitten,
They both produce a *pussy-kitten*.
And more, to make the likeness sure,
They're playful both with looks demure.
We warmly wish this best of wives,
More like a *cat*—to have nine lives."

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exception. The sole record of his playfulness is in 1783, when he was found wheeling Sheridan's little son "rapidly" in a child's hand-chaise at Harrow;[1] but we can hear Fox sportive over the stubbles, or watch him bear-fighting in the corridors of St. Anne's. We can see Pitt playing at leap-frog and blind-man's buff at Wimbledon, or trying to recover his dignity when his secretaries surprised him with a face half-blacked by burnt corks, or, in younger days, scattering the pulp of his friend Ryder's opera-hat over the flower-beds in the dawn. Fox again, after the mass meeting for reform in February, 1784, was dragged by a "low mob" in his chariot to Devonshire House with Colonel Stanhope and Mr. Hanger for coachmen, and George North and two other fashionables as smart footmen behind,[2] greatly to the indignation of the pompous Jenkinson, who used to sum himself up as "the Member for Rye in every respect whatever." Nobody would suspect Lord Chancellor Loughborough of levity, yet in 1799 he, Pitt, Dundas, and Canning, together with Mrs. Crewe and a bevy of beauties, played at "magical music" in the Princess Caroline's mild saturnalia at Blackheath. Pitt, "by the divine power of harmony," was forced to kiss a bust of the Queen of Russia. Dundas squeezed the Princess's hand, calling her "angel," while Frere and Long, disguised as nurses, were tied together and hugged two bolsters draped to represent babies.[3]

Nor should we dismiss the bacchanalians without noticing the oddity, absent from the cups of Pitt or even of Fox, which distinguished those of one who was half seas over on the first night of "The School for Scandal." Byron has related that Sheridan in his old age drove back with him one night in the same condition from Watier's. He insisted on stopping the carriage in Piccadilly and got out, not as Rogers has reported of Porson, to disgrace himself,[4] but actually to kneel down and say his prayers on the cold pavement.

[1] Cf. Prior's "Life of Burke," p. 66.
[2] Cf. "Hist. Man. Comm., Abergavenny MS.," p. 66.
[3] Minto, "Life and Letters," Vol. III., p. 61.
[4] Cf. Rogers' "Table-Talk," p. 218.

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8. "What is England now?" sighed Horace Walpole in 1773, "a sink of Indian wealth filled by Nabobs and emptied by Macaronis." The century's ornateness (even its simplicity was ornate) extended to its wealth, and in the scramble for money, hasard was the resort and the excitement of the idle or the desperate. The gambling rage of the period is as notorious as it was ubiquitous, from the shilling "EO" tables under the Piazza to the green baize of the great clubs and houses. Estates were often won or lost at a sitting, and in one instance they were generously restored. Quadrille as a game of hasard accompanied quadrille as a dance long before the new-fangled valse had been lashed as lascivious by Sheridan,[1] or, later, by Byron. At one of these galas the Duke of Northumberland lost no less than £20,000 over the quinze before the queens of hearts at the other end of the room had finished their cotillons. At another, Lord Clermont won even a larger sum. Fox, of course, was possessed by the demon, as he owned years after he had exorcised it,[2] and he would sit up night after night at the faro-table with his gloves on to prevent his hands being smeared by the candle-grease. But this happened long before he had retired to roses and prosody at St. Anne's, where Fitzpatrick found him sitting on a haycock, reading novels and watching the jays steal his cherries. With that same kinsman of the rake reformed, Lord Tankerville told Rogers that he had played cards at Brooks's from ten at night till six next afternoon, a waiter standing by all the time to warn them whose deal it was when they grew drowsy. Sheridan, who confined his ventures to bets and occasional speculations,[3] and moreover denounced the evil in

[1] Among the Sheridan MSS. is a set of verses satirising it. Cf. *post*, Vol. II., ch. 11.

[2] He alluded to this in his speech (1806) on the preliminaries to the impeachment of Dundas, then Lord Melville, for allowing speculation with the public funds.

[3] In his later days he renounced betting altogether; cf. his speech of June 19, 1812, given *post*, Vol. II., ch. 13. Wraxall asserts that Sheridan joined two ladies of the highest distinction in a ruinous speculation in the funds. Cf. "Posthumous Memoirs," Vol. III., p. 378. This seems to be borne but by one of our new letters to the Duchess of Devonshire which

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Parliament, assured the same gossip that he had handed the charming Duchess of Devonshire into her carriage when she was literally sobbing over her losses. She habitually pretended to play for stakes much smaller than those which she really ventured. Indeed, her passion for play—nearly as ruinous as Lady Elizabeth Luttrell's—brought her to the verge of a temporary estrangement from the Duke. The writer has seen an obsequious letter from Coutts, begging her to let him arrange her affairs, and profit at the same time by a transfer of her account,[1] and another from herself, at the last, entreating a loan of £200 from Lord Holland, who seems to have declined. Her sister, too, Lady Bessborough, was so bitten by the craze, that in 1797, together with other great ladies, she was fined at Marlborough Street for gaming at the house of Albinia, Lady Buckinghamshire. The speculative Henry Martindale found the funds and played the croupier, and we learn from one of Sheridan's letters to the Duchess of Devonshire in our new series, that Martindale had a hold on her also, which Sheridan used side-efforts to counteract.[2] So notorious was the female gambling in high places that Lord Kenyon openly declared that he would not scruple to put such offenders in the pillory; and by this name, indeed, a wit, punning on its portico and satirising its peccadilloes, entitled Carlton House. Yet paper passed over the tables much oftener than cash, and the young Wilberforce was cured of cards for ever by keeping the bank at Goosetree's and fearing to negotiate the acceptances of his hard-driven companions.[3] As for the wagers, who does not remember

find place in the second Appendix. It is dated 1790, and concerns some joint ventures. A sentence of it runs, "If good fortune has any good nature and will do that, let us try her and tempt her once more." Sheridan played but never gambled at card-tables, and when he played at country houses, like Mrs. Crewe's, it was sometimes to mask his feelings. Cf. "The Two Duchesses," p. 111.

[1] He was evidently flattered when she signed herself "Yours affectionately" in reply.

[2] Sheridan was trying to recover documents which he blames Martindale for withholding from the Duchess. The letter is dated "July 27," and probably belongs to the series of 1792. It also mentions Coutts.

[3] For the foregoing details, Wraxall and other similar "Memoirs,"

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them? Perhaps the most heartless was one made at Brooks's over the body of a man knocked down by a carriage at their doorstep. They betted whether he was alive or dead without stirring an inch to succour him. Sheridan early fell in with the vogue. Six years after he entered Parliament he won a bet from Hare and the Duke of Devonshire.[1] Moore has noted, for the year 1793 alone, political wagers amounting to no less than a thousand and seventy-five guineas. A theatrical one, for the same year, figures, together with fresh political wagers, among the Sheridan Manuscripts. He bets Storace and Kelly (composer and singer) "a rump (steak) and 12," "that the loss to the Drury Lane proprietors on their opera undertaking will exceed £5,000," and a guinea each that the loss will exceed that sum, repeating the bet in an ascending scale up to a deficit of £11,000.[2] A further bet is recorded that he will not write another drama in five acts, several as to whether Pitt will be out or in, and, if we may trust the journals, one with the Prince of Wales as to the sex of the unborn child of Sheridan's second marriage.[3]

The rage for gaming of every description was responsible not only for debt, but for crime, and the private robbers rivalled the public. It was not sharpers alone who prospered by preying on the Prince of Wales and Charles Fox. High-bred highwaymen infested society, and Lady Elliot has recounted how her purse was snatched from her hand by an old

passim; Wilberforce's "Life"; Devonshire House and Sheridan MSS.; "Annual Register for 1797," "Chronicle," p. 11 (March 11); Lord Sidmouth's "Life," Vol. I., p. 154; and "Sheridan's Speeches," Vol. I., p. 15 (May 15, 1781). In Eg. MS. 1976, f. 1 (letter from J. R Cocker, solicitor, to R. B. S., "Nassau Street, December 8, 1790"), occurs an allusion to one of these transactions.

[1] Devonshire House MS. The Duchess to Lady Spencer, October 16, 1786. (Printed in the *Anglo-Saxon Review* for September, 1899.)

[2] In December, 1799, there is a record of still another bet that the King will come to Drury Lane pantomime. Cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 6, and cf. f. 16.

[3] Cf. the newspaper-cuttings Eg. MS. 1975, ff. 150 *et seq.* The Storace bet bears date Jan. 18, 1796. One wager, recorded elsewhere, he must have won—a bet of three hundred guineas to two that Pitt would be still in power on March 19, 1795. Similar bets were made in 1793 with General Tarleton, Mr. St. John and Lord Sefton.

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acquaintance who frequented the best houses. She was sitting in her carriage before a shop which her sister had just entered, when he rode up, bowed, shook her by the hand, and her purse out of it.[1]

9. Of debt this era was the millennium; nor was it viewed as a drawback to character.[2] "Long corks and long credit" was a toast, and Burke, in criticising the debt laws, complained bitterly that every man was presumed to be solvent, an assumption, he added, by no means in accordance with the facts.[3] The correspondence of the time—nor least the theatrical correspondence—teems with piteous appeals for relief and pleas that distress was due wholly to commitments for others. The dew of sentiment dropped freely on the sands of Cursitor Street, and arrested authors would urge "the horrors of this place of affliction."[4] In low and high Bohemia debt was a matter of course. Murphy and Cumberland, both wits and scholars as well as playwrights, owed everywhere, and the former, "with no desire to deceive," paid in dishonoured bills and by the assignment of a copyright already sold.[5] Even poor Tickell was "teazed to death," as his wife assures us, "for money which God knows we can very ill spare." In society fine ladies would borrow five pounds from their very footmen, whose eternal nosegays and silk stockings cost a small fortune.[6] Lady Teazle was correctly fashionable in this particular; nor is the flunkey's negotiation with Charles's usurer out

[1] Cf. Minto, "Life and Letters." The general insecurity of the roads after nightfall, even by Holland House, is notorious. Horace Walpole mentions footpads at Knightsbridge. In 1784 Mrs. Tickell writes that "a gentleman and two ladys" were robbed on the way to Hampton Court between seven and eight in the evening. Sheridan MSS. The bar that divides the entrances to Lansdowne Passage was put up to prevent the escape of thieves on horseback.

[2] Cf. Lady Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. II., p. 233.

[3] Speech at the Bristol Guildhall, 1780, cf. "Works," Vol. II., p. 140. The passage is his exculpation for opposing Lord Beauchamp's bill. Burke says, "I am a debtor to the debtors."

[4] Garrick Corr.

[5] "Early Life of S. Rogers," p. 269.

[6] Lady Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. III., p. 164.

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of keeping with the period. In Parliament very few leaders went unencumbered, and though vast fortunes were amassed by nabobs, contractors, scriveners, and grocers,[1] a few dukes and a few bankers between them seem to have financed both the senate and the theatre. The accumulations of national debt reflected themselves in private life. Rodney was so embarrassed that he owed his extrication to the generosity of a French Field-Marshal. Fox's ally, General Burgoyne, had also been forced to take hiding from his creditors in France before he took the field in America. Even Lord North's liabilities had been paid by the King.[2] Pitt, as we have seen, was not free from bailiffs, and in 1786 a sheriff's officer was actually in occupation of Carlton House for two days, and in respect of a sum not exceeding £600.[3] The insolvent drew on the insolvent, and perhaps the most amazing instance is where Fox, on the eve of starting for Newmarket, had recourse for a loan to Sheridan, who was ready to find the money, which luckily was not required.[4] In 1773 Fox owed £100,000 and suffered nine executions in his house. Some years later he had to elude pursuit by taking refuge under the roof of Peter Moore, Sheridan's last friend.[5] He termed his sureties his "bonds-men," and he let them pay "such paltry counters" with sublime indifference. The approach to his bedroom, where,

[1] One of these last left a fortune of £700,000. Cf. "Annual Reg." for 1803. A confectioner made £20,000 out of peppermint drops. In 1773 died a Mrs. Colville, of Old Street, who made £1,000 out of fortune-telling.

[2] Cf. "Hist. Man. Comm., Abergavenny MS.," p. 55. "A personal favour never before conferred but once on any subject."

[3] Cf. Adolphus, Vol. IV., p. 216.

[4] "DEAR SHERIDAN, I have got the money I wanted. So much for the present, and therefore I should be sorry if you gave yourself any trouble about it, but if you can get me 1,000 or 1,500 by the 15th of September it would be a very great convenience to me." (Probably about 1786.) Cited by Fraser Rae, Vol. II., p. 354, n. 1.

[5] At least, so it may be gathered from Wraxall, Vol. IV., p. 71, where he says, speaking of Fox in 1784, "His creditors had . . . become so numerous and importunate about this time that, his effects and books being seized at his lodgings, contiguous to Brookes' in St. James Street, and sold, he was reduced to take refuge at the house of a friend, Mr. Moore, in Sackville Street, Piccadilly."

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unkempt, unshorn, and in soiled nightgear—as Horace Walpole describes him — he received his intimates and the Prince of Wales, was thronged with more prudent though not less swarthy visitors, and was aptly named his "Jerusalem Chamber." There, as Tickell puts it in his "Wreath of Fashion," he used—

> "Soft words to mollify the miser's breast
> And lull relenting usury to rest."

While another satirist thus enlarges on the scene:

> "In order due Volpone next appeared,
> Loose was his hair, unshaven was his beard;
> O'er his whole face was spread a yellow hue,
> Borrowed, perhaps, from some relenting Jew
> Not anxious to be paid—Gold he had none,
> Th' inverted pocket told all that was gone."[1]

Pitt, also a cadet, but the heir to poverty, was hampered from the first, and till 1792, when he became Warden of the Cinque Ports, outstripped the official salary on which he relied for subsistence.[2] Thenceforward, even with £10,000 a year, he could never stem the continuous disorder of his affairs, aggravated by pilfering servants and his reckless purchase of Hollwood. So early as 1787 Robert Smith, whom he made Lord Carrington,[3] was commissioned to examine his accounts,

[1] Cf. "The Diabolíad" (1777), a rare pamphlet. In another, "The Senator" (1772), the youthful Fox is thus described:

> "By turns solicited by different plans,
> Yet fixed to none, Fox dresses, games, harangues
> Where varying fashion leads the sportive band,
> And whim and folly bound it, hand in hand,
> Behold him ambling in these flowery ways
> A model macaroni *à l'Anglaise*."

The excellent lines from Mason's "Heroick Epistle to Sir William Chambers" are too trite for repetition. In the broadsides of the Westminster election of 1784 Fox was called "The Jewish Messiah." Cf. "History of the Westminster Election" (1784), p. 268.

[2] Cf. Wraxall, Vol. IV., p. 225, and Russell's "Fox," Vol. III., p. 265. Pitt's portion did not amount to much more than £250 a year.

[3] The verse affixed to his Wycombe gates may be recalled:

> "Bobby Smith lives here
> Billy Pitt made him a peer
> And took the pen from behind his ear."

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and found, to his amazement, no less than some £7,914 "old bills unpaid," as "a *first* article."[1] One of the earliest symptoms of the King's madness in the next year was that he imagined himself Pitt's creditor for £1,200. Burke, too, remained needy and querulous throughout—Burke, well characterised by his own epitaph on his chief, Rockingham, "*His virtues were his arts.*" But Rockingham's right hand enjoyed opportunities never vouchsafed to Sheridan. It has been questioned which of his two patrons, Rockingham or Verney, furnished the funds out of which Butler's Court was purchased. Likelihood points to Rockingham; it was Verney who really afforded Burke his first entry into Parliament. But, between them, these benefactors enriched him to the tune of over £50,000, and it was rumoured that Verney's eventual impoverishment was due to this bounty. So large were Lord Rockingham's subsidies that he excluded their receiver from his will, much to the expectant's disgust. In spite of his big failures as farmer, Burke only burned his fingers in the bourse speculations which half ruined his brother. Even in 1789, vehemently as he had denounced the East India Company, he demanded a seat on the Board of Control, just as in 1782 he had profited by the space between the Rockingham and Shelburne administrations to pouch a sinecure for his son.[2] It is true that he refused a pension from Rockingham, but he afterwards accepted one secured on the lean exchequer of his native country, and when at length two others rewarded him for joining Pitt, he converted them into cash within a fortnight to meet his

[1] "Wilberforce's Corr.," Vol. I., p. 21. For Pitt's later debts, cf. also Lady Hester Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 69; and for George III.'s hallucination about Pitt, cf. the Duchess of Devonshire's Diary in the Appendix to Vol. II. (3).

[2] So H. Walpole, in his "Memoirs of George III.," but Lord Lansdowne declared the "sinecure" was for Burke himself. Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 225. The negotiation was with Lord J. Cavendish, who stayed in office for a short time after the Foxites resigned. For the Board of Control incident in January, 1789, cf. "Hist. Man. Comm., Abergavenny MS.," p. 70. "He insists upon it for the services and adherence of thirty years" (James Macpherson to J. Robinson).

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pressing liabilities. Nor do these benefits exhaust the list. Sir Joshua Reynolds, perhaps in return for Burke's alleged aid in decorating his "Discourses," not only cancelled a bond for £2,000, but bequeathed that sum to his friend; Burke's physician, Dr. Brocklesby, handed him one thousand pounds in his lifetime. Two thousand he got from the Catholics in Ireland. High-minded as Burke was on the whole, in some respects even austere, the accounts of his office—that paymastership which he had reformed in 1782—continued to remain involved and unsettled. And Burke assuredly did not stint the advancement of kinsfolk. For his brother Dick—"Duck" Burke, as he was called from the Stock Exchange phrase of "lame duck" or defaulter—he procured successively the collectorship of Grenada, a secretaryship to the Treasury, the recordership of Bristol, and a brief in the protracted trial of Warren Hastings. For his son he reserved a lucrative employment immediately after he had been called to the Bar, the joint receivership of Crown lands, and a private auditorship in the gift of Lord Fitzwilliam. William Burke and others of his kindred, were provided for times out of number, in India, the Custom-house, the Army and the Navy. The public paid heavily for Burke's priceless genius.[1]

Such were the private finances of these statesmen. Fox's huge liabilities were defrayed, not only by the father whose riches Gray satirised in his verses on Kingsgate, but also, and long afterwards, by the subscriptions of friends, who ensured

[1] For the above particulars, cf. McCormick's "Memoirs of Burke" (1797), pp. 315—318, 374. William Burke, associated with Edmund from boyhood, was credited with some of his great namesake's writings, cf. Prior's "Life of Edmund Burke," pp. 81, 161. Burke's assistance to Reynolds has often been questioned, but McCormick details its process, Burke correcting and supplementing Reynolds' rough ideas. *Ibid.*, p. 97; Wraxall, Vol. II., p. 30, where the author moots the doubt as to who financed Burke's purchase of Butler's Court, also known as The Gregories. McCormick, however, distinctly states that Burke bought it out of Lord Rockingham's first gift of £21,000: Walpole's "Memoirs of George III."; Lord Albemarle's "Memoirs of Lord Rockingham," Vol. II., p. 240 (the epitaph); Minto, "Life and Letters" (the Irish pensions).

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him a competence,[1] and among whom Sheridan must have contributed his mite. Nor was this the sole instance of Fox's dependence. Years earlier he had been collected for at Brooks', and this was the occasion when a member, discussing the proposal, delicately asked Selwyn how "Charles" would "take it," and was answered with "immediately, of course." Moreover, in 1802 the Duke of Bedford bequeathed him no less than £10,000. And yet Fox quartered his natural daughter[2] on the generosity of a Government that also pensioned his "Perdita" Robinson.[3] Pitt, in his turn, had been subscribed for, nor was a voluntary loan of £12,000 ever repaid, though the nation voted £40,000 to defray his debts after his death. Sheridan had no rich father. His wealthy friends never subscribed for him, and the sole private offer ever made was declined. He got no legacies, and no minister ever procured him a penny. Yet his debts—not a fifth of their supposed amount, not half of Burke's, or a sixth of Pitt's, or a thirtieth of Fox's—were amply discharged by his survivors. Nor should it be forgotten that he began life without capital, and passed most of it during a period of financial panics and among the most spendthrift surroundings.

10. It was a mammon-worshipping age. Pleasure and ambition exacted their golden tribute, and if property upheld order, politics certainly played the part of property's poor relations. Generalisation gives but a faint idea of the venality. Everything was farmed—even America, and "Farmer" George himself

[1] In 1793. Cf. "Fox's Corr.," Vol. III., p. 40..

[2] Miss Willoughby, who was with him when he died. He had also a deaf and dumb son, to whom he was much attached, and whom Rogers met, and mentions more than once in his "Table-Talk."

[3] His passing passion for "Perdita" has been doubted. But not only does his aunt, Lady Sarah Napier, mention it in one of her letters, but among the Sheridan Manuscripts is a document about her—not too chivalrous in tone—in Fox's own hand, and with his signature, which settles the matter beyond question. Moreover, she figures as Fox's inamorata both in the skit of "The School for Scandal," already cited, and in the satires on the Westminster election, in which she canvassed for Fox. Cf. "The Westminster Election" (1784), p. 263.

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had to furnish £12,000 for each election. The general dry rot —"bare, bald corruption," Sheridan styled it—taints the back-scenes of Fox's fury against Shelburne and even the tirades against undue influence which he thundered from the high horse of his India Bill. Perhaps the extent of this evil has not been sufficiently realised. At a time when the population of Great Britain did not amount to ten millions, or that of London to six hundred thousand,[1] while a single commercial corporation swayed the destinies of thirty millions in India, ministers were forced to work queer miracles with their loaves and fishes. The "Bengal Squad" was powerful and clamorous. Even members' votes were bartered for pensions, and Sheridan urged that the ordinary waste in this direction was "so great as to be sufficient to maintain all the labouring poor."[2] In a rare political squib on "The School for Scandal" the son of Lord North expresses his indignation at not having received any sinecure "for the last three weeks."[3] Lord Chatham himself, in his last fatal ministry, had recourse to pensions as a means of shaking off inconvenient aspirants to office; and Wilkes, when he returned from his French exile, made no scruple of demanding £5,000 and an annuity as "compensation." The system reached its climax in a case mentioned by Fox of a Dublin delinquent, "who, after having obtained the Prime Serjeantry, the Secretaryship of State, and twenty other great places," haggled over the addition of a major's half-pay to the rest of his emoluments.[4] In three months of Lord Shelburne's brief administration the correct Dunning secured a peerage and a pension, though Lord Shelburne set his face like a flint against jobbery, himself frequented Smithfield to buy up cattle for the Government, and as he told

[1] Cf. *Political Mag.*, 1780.

[2] "Sheridan's Speeches," Vol. III., p. 158; and for the sale of votes to Government, cf. "Hist. Man. Comm., Abergavenny MS.," p. 71.

[3] "The School for Scandal," etc., another satire, "Never before printed." Printed for G. Lister, etc. (1784).

[4] Russell's "Fox," Vol. II., p. 22. Fox to Lord Northington, November 1, 1783.

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the House years afterwards, meant, but for his sudden dismissal, to have turned "the staff of office into a knife that should cut off every finger daring to intrude into the public purse."[1] The frugal Rigby, under whose name Disraeli has lashed Croker, was for twelve years practically sole Paymaster of the Forces, and left no less than half a million of "public money"; while the rich Lord Walsingham claimed even old Storer's £400 a year sinecure at the Board of Trade, which led to Horace Walpole's epigram of "Ermine and Mud."[2] When it was objected in 1811 that "our Cato," Lord Grenville, could scarcely come in, so difficult would he find his distribution of offices, a wit (and a woman) answered that there need be no difficulty, for Lord Grenville would be quite willing to take them all himself. Even the Grenvillites cavilled at his stipulation for the renewal of that lucrative Auditorship which years before had been revived to content him.[3] And this, too, when he was drawing an income of £4,000 as Ranger of the Park, and his brother Buckingham £8,000 as Teller of the Exchequer—Grenville, whose virtue nothing could satiate, Buckingham whose total sinecures amounted to £25,000 a year, whose discontent at a marquisate rendered his brother's life a burden, and who died babbling of ungathered strawberry leaves.[4] Both of these brothers, indeed, were exemplary

[1] Speech of May 2, 1796. Burke praised Dunning's "proud honour," his "firm and determined integrity," in his Bristol Guildhall speech of 1780.

[2] H. Walpole to Lady Ossory, December 18, 1781.

[3] Pitt had rebuked him for wishing to unite his secretarial salary to the emoluments of this post. Grenville then compounded by retaining the Auditorship but foregoing its salary. Cf. "Hist. Man. Comm., Fortescue MS.," pp. 511, 512. He was known as "Boguey" Grenville, cf. Minto: "Life and Letters," Vol. I., p. 140.

[4] Buckingham also pestered his brother to distraction about a Captain Nugent's promotion. Cf. "Hist. Man. Comm. (Dropmore) Fortescue MS." Lord Liverpool's character of Lord Grenville may be here recalled, ". . . He is in outward manner offensive to the last degree. He is rapacious with respect to himself and family, but a great economist with respect to every one and every thing else." "Lord Liverpool to Lord Auckland, April 4, 1807." Cf. Lord Auckland's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 307. In the "Album of Streatham," a rare pamphlet which continues "The Rolliad," his "negotiations" are spoken of in the plural number as a token "that his

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harpies, and in 1803, when the Prince eluded their talons at Stowe, were miserably cheated, to Lady Hester Stanhope's delight.[1] Dundas, an arch-pluralist long before his patriotic speculations were detected, had showered Scottish patronage on his friends and relations.[2] Pitt, indeed, invented a third secretaryship for his especial benefit, and this caused Sheridan to remark in a speech of 1795 "that we certainly had a most gentlemanlike administration, and that Mr. Secretary Dundas was three times as much a gentleman as any of them, for he had three places." Again, George Rose in 1797 was at once Secretary to the Treasury with a salary of £3,200 a year, Clerk to the House of Lords with one of £4,000, and Master of the Pleas, the emoluments of which, joined to other perquisites, swelled the whole to an income of £10,000. When Mr. Pelham became Home Secretary in 1801 he saw his father an earl and his uncle a bishop. In 1805 Lord Castlereagh, by Pitt's desire, joined his old post of the Board of Control to that of Secretary for War and the Colonies; while on Pitt's death Lord Hawkesbury, impotent to form a Cabinet, was consoled with the Cinque Ports and £4,000 a year. Pitt himself, however, like Fox, Grey and Sheridan, was wholly unbribeable. He despised lucre as proudly as his father had done. He scorned Lord Thurlow's shabby advice to appropriate the clerkship of the Pells, and presented that leviathan of sinecures to his opponent Barré, at whose death Addington bestowed it on his own sickly son.[3] He rejected a city offer of £10,000 a year, and a continental present of £100,000, while the pictures dispatched by foreign potentates were left to be claimed by dishonest servants or to moulder in the cellars of the Custom-house, a department which he had cleansed.[4] On declining to take the helm

grateful country may place the most grateful reliance on him in every emergency."

[1] Cf. Lady H. Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. II., p. 58. Sheridan's friend, Thomas Grenville, however, was an exception, and left his books to the British Museum because they had been bought out of his sinecures.

[2] Cf. "Lord Melville's Trial" (1806), p. viii.

[3] "Life of Lord Sidmouth," Vol. II., p. 72 (1802).

[4] Lady H. Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. II., pp. 61—63.

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in March, 1783, his "purity and steadiness" were declared by the King's Jenkinson to be "absolutely incompatible with the morals, manners and grounds of attachment of those by whose means alone the government of this country can be carried on." But though he abolished many sinecures, he was forced to cement his party by a system of oblique bribery which had long replaced Walpole's most golden rule. For many years he had to cope with the established oligarchs, and titles and places proved his amulets in crises which did not prevent so-called statesmen from squabbling over the measure of tapes and ribands.[1] Besides, it was *de rigueur* for the head of every party group to pauperise a regiment of on-hangers. It is almost touching to read in the complacent letters of that Addington who revered Lord Eldon above all mortals except the King, with what sordid unction "Brother Hiley," "Brother Bragge," "Mr. Bragge," and the whole tribe of connexion were religiously and unscrupulously considered. "On a gouverné par l'esprit de coterie," exclaimed Napoleon in 1798. "Il faut gouverner par l'esprit de la nation." It was against this spirit of *côterie* that Sheridan kicked; nor is it wholly extinct in our own generation. But, indeed, the general meanness of grandees at this time baffles description,[2] nor was it confined to politics. Perhaps its height was reached by the Prince of Wales, who requited a poor parasite ruined by royal billeting with the gift of—an old wig.[3] Sheridan's sister tells us—and she was present—that when the Olympian honoured Tunbridge Wells he actually sent round a collection list for his own supper to the public and private houses.

And connected with avarice was the slippery rule of political tergiversation. Disappointed suitors for preferment joined opposition and sprang up, full-blown "patriots," like mushrooms

[1] Cf. Sheridan's invective in 1802. "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 497.

[2] Cf. the Duke of Richmond's behaviour in 1782, and Lord Abercorn's in 1801.

[3] Cf. Lady H. Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. II., p. 101.

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in a night.[1] The indispensable Dundas was a perpetual incumbent, a veritable Vicar of Bray, while Wedderburn, who started with the popular party, deserted to Lord North, favoured Fox, supported Pitt on the India Bill, re-deserted to Fox on the Regency question, and once more harked over to Pitt, may certainly be said to have won his woolsack on every side. When Eden excused himself in 1785 for apostasy to Lord North and added that it arose merely from a temporary affair of trade which he was appointed to negotiate, "I have always considered the whole transaction as a mere affair of trade," replied the lord in the blue riband. But Eden could press as many arguments as he had children.

The commerce in honours was worse. Traffic in titles had started with James I., but in the eighteenth century it was an unblushing business on a colossal scale. During Pitt's first thirteen years of power he made no less than eighty-three new peers,[2] which stung Sheridan into remarking of a noble earl's "improvident impatience," that it aroused all the marquis within him.[3] Even the bumpkin Rolle could earn his peerage. Pitt managed to confer no less than one hundred and forty coronets before he died, and even when he relinquished the reins of power, almost half the House of Lords were his offspring. A fact over which Sheridan made merry again in his fine speech on the Additional Forces Bill, and a need which none more bitterly regretted than the great minister in the darkening of his days.[4]

[1] For a typical instance, cf. that of Sir Fletcher Norton in April, 1780. Adolphus, Vol. III., p. 120.

[2] In the first four years alone he granted forty-two peerages. Cf. Fox's speech of January 19, 1789, on the Regency, noted by Adolphus, Vol. IV., p. 352. In the years 1796 and 1797 he created or promoted thirty-five.

[3] Speech of January 21, 1794, on the Address: "The throne is in danger! We will support the throne, but let us share the smiles of royalty. The order of nobility is in danger! 'I will fight for nobility,' says the viscount, 'but my zeal would be greater if I were made an earl.' 'Rouse all the marquis within me,' exclaims the earl, 'and the peerage never turned forth a more undaunted champion of its cause than I shall prove,'" etc. The corrected report exists in the Sheridan MSS.

[4] Cf. Lady H. Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. II., p. 163, and Sheridan's "Speeches," Vol. III., p. 497.

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"Pitt created," observes Disraeli in "Sybil," "a plebeian aristocracy. He made peers of second-rate squires and fat graziers. He caught them in the alleys of Lombard Street and clutched them from the counting-houses of Cornhill." One of these "fat graziers" recommended as "worth a baronetcy," was sent up on approval and rejected because Pitt shuddered at a dialect which rivalled Sir Pitt Crawley's. So exorbitant were the claims that when the Marquis of Abercorn asked only for the Garter, the minister wrote with relief that it was not a request to be made "Emperor of Germany." Nor was it only on such foundations that Pitt poised his power. His family ruled paramount. Even in 1789 the Marquis of Buckingham, his cousin, was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland and master of her patronage. His brother, the underrated Lord Chatham, was First Lord of the Admiralty; General Pitt commanded the forces in Ireland; Lord Sidney, Lord Chatham's father-in-law, was secretary of State, and complete controller of colonial patronage; his cousin, Grenville, who eventually mutinied against him, was paymaster with the reversion on an old life of the Irish remembrancership, a post worth £3,000 a year; Elliot, Pitt's brother-in-law, was Clerk of the Pells; Lord Camelford, another cousin, and Lord Elliot, Elliot's father, had been promoted to the peerage. And what had been bought could be sold. From 1784 onwards England's case was no better than when, twenty years earlier, the great Chatham characterised a placeman by saying he could not be honest if he would, and would not if he could. Charles Fox in 1805 trounced Pitt's satellites as "the *âmes damnées* of the Court of Corruption."[1] "Cash down" was the motto, and Wraxall (whom his foes dubbed "rascal") has artlessly recounted his own stipulations for reward. Everyone remembers "The Critic's" "A thousand pounds! ha! thou hast touched me nearly," and perhaps the sole line in "The School for Scandal," which time has robbed of its sting, is that in the auction scene about the portraits of two members of Parliament—"the first time that they were ever bought and

[1] Cf. "Fox's Corr.," Vol. IV., p. 114.

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sold."[1] These were sober truths. A minister's ante-chamber was a court of requests, and Goldsmith hit the mark in his "Goodnatured Man" when the sham place-monger Lofty remarks: "My dear madam, all this is but a mere exchange. We do greater things for one another every day. . . . Let me suppose you the first lord of the treasury; you have an employment in you that I want; I have a place in me that you want; do me here; do you there; interest on both sides, few words, flat, done and done, and it's over." Not without reason forty years earlier, did Swift scratch on the window of Lord Carteret's vestibule,

> "My very good lord, 'tis a very hard task
> For a man to wait here who has nothing to ask.

Sinecures were political perquisites, and middlemen lived by procuring them—even middlewomen, like Mrs. Bellamy the actress, or the "Quakeress"—Mrs. Grieve, who victimised Fox, or long afterwards the notorious Mrs. Clarke. Some of the great ladies were not much nicer, and one of them "rode" no less than sixteen nominees at the same time.[2] No income was thought too large for a staunch adherent. When Fox took to counting his Regency chickens in 1789, he excused himself to Thomas Grenville for offering an unsuitable place on the ground that his friend could not think of accepting any emolument much under seven thousand a year;[4] yet Fox is to be found upholding

[1] Corrected by Sheridan in his MS. from "bought *or* sold."

[2] Carteret answered:

> "My very good Dean, there are few that come here
> But have something to ask or something to fear."

[3] Cf. the instance in Wraxall, Vol. III., p. 105. Wraxall knew this "lady of quality."

[4] Sheridan MSS. "Fox to Thomas Grenville, February 3, 1789. 'Private.' . . . I think it would be miserable economy of the good we have amongst us if we were to put you into an office which can be executed by the Duke of Dorset or Lord Beauchamp. Besides that, upon its present footing I do not know how you would be able to live upon the income of it, which is, I believe, under £7,000 a year."

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the party system on the very score of its unmercenary effects.[1] Sheridan's brother, on vacating his post as Irish Secretary at War in 1789—a post which he owed to Sheridan—received a pension of a thousand pounds.[2] All that Sheridan could ever conjure with, on the other hand, was a brief influence for small preferments and unlimited theatre-passes for his constituents. And yet what sinecures could then mean may be evidenced by the case of Willis, Bishop of Bath and Wells, who, *and whose son*, were "Joint Decypherers to the King." Nor was the system wholly limited to politics. Noblemen beguiled *ennui* by salarying professed wits, and poesy, too, had been subsidised.

> "Thence simple bards by simple prudence taught,
> To this wise town by simple patrons brought,
> In simple manner utter simple lays,
> And take with simple pensions simple praise."[3]

As for decorations, the bitter and renegade Francis received his Order of the Bath, yet Sheridan went undecorated, and remains the more distinguished for lacking what he has himself termed "an ornament which favoured peers wear all the year round, chimney-sweepers only on the first of May."[4] "It is easy," Byron heard Sheridan say in age, and saw him weep in saying it, "Sir, it is easy for my Lord G[renville] or Earl G[rey], or Marquis B. [of Bath], or Lord H[ertford], with thousands a year—some of it *presently* derived or *inherited* in sinecures or acquisitions from the public money, to boast of their patriotism and keep aloof from temptation; but they do not know from what temptations those have kept aloof who had equal pride, at least equal talents and not unequal passions, and nevertheless knew not in the course of their lives what it was

[1] "Is there any plan likely to make so great a number of persons resist the temptations of titles and emoluments?" "Fox's Corr.," Vol. III., p. 91.

[2] Cf. Eg. MS. 1975 f, 146 d.

[3] Churchill's "Prophecy of Famine" (1762). One of the hireling wits, Hewenson, is mentioned by Taylor in his "Records."

[4] In his handwriting on a scrap of paper in the Sheridan MSS.

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to have a shilling of their own."[1] Could a more telling indictment be cited of the system which doomed the politician who scorned to be a sycophant?

11. It was an age, on the whole, of insolent hauteur, heightened by the exclusiveness which limited society to less than three hundred, and the Cabinet, till 1801, to seven. Old Lady Albemarle once said to a gentleman beneath her notice: "You have heard that I have abused you, but it is not true, for I would not take the trouble of talking about you; but if I *had* said anything of you, it would have been that you look like a blackguard on week-days and on Sundays like an apothecary."[2] Lady Hester Stanhope recounts how, on the rare occasions when doctors or tutors were admitted into the drawing-room, all conversation was tabooed except on matters affecting their profession. Rebels against this rule were rewarded with a stony stare. Even levelling nobles, like Lord Stanhope, always excepted themselves in their professed patronage of equality, and when Thackeray makes old Miss Crawley, protesting against caste, order Becky to mend her frock, he has preserved a true *trait* of these times. When Georgiana of Devonshire, in her enthusiasm, frequented the Clapham laboratory of William Cavendish, (and she had fitted up a laboratory of her own), her husband forbade the intimacy with the words, "He is not a gentleman—*he works.*"[3] And Georgiana herself, when she first met and was fascinated by the Sheridans, doubted whether she ought to invite a singer and the son of a player.[4]

[1] Byron's "Letters and Journals," Vol. V., p. 437. "To be sure," adds Byron, "he contrived to exact a good many of other people's." But Sheridan's meaning, of course, is that he started life without capital. Elsewhere Byron speaks of the "red-hot ploughshares" of such temptations.

[2] Lord Holland's story in Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 314.

[3] Devonshire House MSS. This had been otherwise in France. Cf. Molière's "Sicilien": "Contre la coutume de France qui ne veut pas qu'un gentilhomme sache rien faire."

[4] Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 335. Another who abetted her doubts was the Mrs. Legge, who would not suffer the as yet unwedded Lady Hamilton to nurse her in Rome.

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12. It was an age of conversation, like all ages influenced by women and in touch with France. Not an event in life but was set to occasional verse, and the very gardens looked like open-air albums. Rhyme often weighed more than reason. Wit and elegance unlocked the gates of the great houses, but the golden key was cast in a political mould. The Guelphs and the Ghibellines were not more at daggers drawn than the followers of Fox, almost always in opposition, and the followers of Pitt, continually in power. Devonshire House and the *salons* of Mrs. Crewe and Mrs. Bouverie drew the former; the latter repaired to the Duchesses of Gordon and Rutland, or to Lady Salisbury, the first a brilliant cynic, the two others mature beauties: while later, Lady Hester Stanhope, always a despot and finally a mystic, became her uncle's *generalissima*. Most of the wits, however, were on the Whig side, and with the eventual exception of Windham, Pitt won over no brilliant conversationalist. The Blues, on the other hand—Mrs. Thrale, who may be said to have civilised Dr. Johnson, Mrs. Cholmondeley, Mrs. Montague and their sisterhood—were less partisan and more catholic in their assemblies; but Mrs. Thrale was despised by the Duchess of Devonshire as "vulgar," though she sprang from an older stock than the Spencers. In the high world Hare has left the greatest reputation for converse after Sheridan, yet less is known of his pleasantries than of any other, though Fox loved him to the last, and paid a gentle tribute to his informal wit.[1] Of the fashionable Luttrell, who belongs to a younger generation and lived to dictate taste when Disraeli wrote "The Young Duke," a few quips and three books remain. Of the older and more sardonic George Selwyn much is recorded, though most of his *mots* are as metallic as the wealth which through his daughter—his one soft spot—he transmitted to the Hertfords. But "the Hare of many friends," to whom

[1] Cf. "Fox's Corr.," Vol. III., p. 242. In a letter to the Duchess of Devonshire of 1786 Sheridan calls him "a very pleasant man." He married a sister of Sir Abraham Hume, who brought him a fortune, and for a time he sat in Parliament. Cf. Wraxall, Vol. III., p. 384.

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the Duchess of Devonshire promised an annuity if he would marry her cousin, died, after much gambling, poor and in a foreign land. The conversational flood floated, of course, its full freight of bores. There was even a club of these—"The Botherers." Authors pestered their friends with manuscripts as much as in the Augustan days, and voted every success a plagiarism. Hence, Cumberland and Sir Fretful in Sheridan's "Critic." One of these unhappy men—George Dyer—despairing of an audience elsewhere, betook himself to Dr. Graham's mud-patients, who, immersed in earth up to their perukes, were powerless to escape from listening.

13. It was beyond all others an age of scandal, and Sheridan's comedy was literally one with a purpose.[1] He himself often complains of misrepresentation, and in one of his rambling letters, "It is a world, alas!" he sighs, "in which propriety of conduct, purity and decorum of sentiment are only taunted at and reviled."[2] Society was split up into hostile cliques which grazed the confines of each other's parishes. The newspapers formed a whispering gallery of libels and innuendoes that spared neither age nor sex. Pasquin—as Williams called himself—reduced slander to a fine, or rather a gross, art; the coarsest caricatures hung in every print-shop. Newspapers indulged in extreme licence, and privacy was the privilege of the obscure. When Mrs. Thrale dared Dr. Johnson and married Piozzi, the mass of malevolent gossip formed a small literature, or, to repeat Erasmus, a "blotterature" of its own. And scandal did not only stir abroad; like charity, it began at home. The "wild" Lady Wallace (the Duchess of Gordon's sister), seated one evening at a whist party, overheard herself traduced, and when her partner inquired whether she had "honours," she replied after a long pause and in broad Scotch, "I was waiting to see if those ladies would

[1] Cf. Sheridan's younger sister's remarks in her niece's "Memoir of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," p. 408, and the tenor of Garrick's Prologue to Sheridan's play.

[2] Cf. the Appendix to Vol. II.

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leave me any honour at all."[1] Rough personalities disfigured parliamentary debate. Pitt was often rallied on his cold distance from the fair sex; and Pitt himself, only two years before he died, singled out Sheridan's "fiery" countenance for a rude onslaught. The witty Courtenay vilified Lord Hood in 1782, and a year later Burke, who constantly passed the bounds, called Lord Shelburne "a Borgia and a Catiline." The Crown itself was not spared. Burke in the Lower House shouted that God had "hurled" the King from his throne when madness overtook George in 1788 and 1789. Lord Loughborough was even more headstrong in the Upper House, and ventured to address him as if present: "Your Majesty," he said, "has lost thirteen colonies, but your palace stands where it did. Millions of national debt have been accumulated, but your lords with white staves stand where you left them. . . . Look into your red book and you will find it just the same."[2] Everyone knows the story of that awful bully and wiseacre, Thurlow, who, after meaning to rat from the King's sinking ship to the cockleshell of Fox and the heir-apparent, asseverated before the peers: "When I forsake my King, may my God forsake me." "He'll see you d——d first," exclaimed Wilkes, who was in hearing; and Burke, standing by him, added, "The sooner the better." This was bludgeoning, and in contrast it is well to remember Sheridan's rapier of polished sarcasm, from which the foil of amenity was seldom removed. Charles Townshend had been the same. When the "prig" Harris entered Parliament with the qualifications of one volume on grammar and another on virtue, Townshend only observed that the House of Commons was the wrong market for wares of this description.

But these are mere pin-pricks compared with the terrorism which scandal could wield in the hands of oligarchs and bureaucrats. Take France and the case of Beaumarchais,

[1] Devonshire House MSS. The Duchess to her mother, January 21, 22, 1784. (Printed in the *Anglo-Saxon Review* for September, 1899, p. 70.)

[2] Cf. Adolphus, Vol. IV., p. 385 (January 22, 1789).

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who in one year was falsely accused of forgery, and at the same time imprisoned for an affray wantonly fastened on him by the insolent Duke of Chaulnes. The tattle against Sheridan pales into insignificance compared with the systematic conspiracies against the great satirist across the Channel. But the cause was the same—jealousy, and the mistrust of a supple trespasser annexing domains beyond his sphere but within his scope. Beaumarchais proved an astute and prudent man of action, yet (quite apart from his defects) slander hurt Beaumarchais, as it did Sheridan, in matters of which history must now absolve them, with the result that Beaumarchais, like Sheridan, dramatised his invective against calumny.[1] The dissemination of *canards* vied with the abuse, and Sheridan has parodied these in an unknown fragment that remains among his papers, and typifies the point-on-point style which he employed in "The Critic":—

> "Victorious by land and sea—
> Beaten at home and abroad—
> The French war ruined—
> Our merchants all undone—
> Arms conquered—
> Black Island taken—
> The Russians our friends—
> A peace in the Spring—
> An invasion at Christmas."

14. It was a literary age, and we have already noted the emancipation of the muses. Letters in the preceding period had been mainly letters of introduction to posts and preferments. George II. mended that by his aversion to the arts, while George III., except in the case of pamphleteers, ended it altogether. Literature, since the days of Defoe, walked in the markets and highways of life and mixed with the people. Through its very freedom literature was turning democratic, and Sheridan, though he epitomised the wit of high society, differs from the Restoration dramatists by never introducing noblemen into his plays. His characters are citizens—

[1] In "The Barber of Seville."

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citizens of some quality, it is true, for the aristocracy leavened the *bourgeoisie*, but citizens, all the same, with scant reverence for old things or old age.

15. It was a period, further, of extortionate tradesmen who throve on debts at compound interest and the general insecurity of the times. This is what Sheridan meant when he wrote that "paying only encourages them," and when he uttered that immortal sentence to a friend settling his bills: "What a waste of money!" Lady Hester Stanhope dwells on the gross overcharges made by such as battened on Pitt's lack of leisure.[1] No slur was attached to celebrities for ignoring the duns whose wares their patronage advertised, and in this respect even Lord Melbourne became notorious. Tradesmen and statesmen were natural enemies, but debt was not confined to public careers. Holcroft relates that while still a greenhorn he was induced by one of these sharks to furnish his new house on a hire-system, with the result that in a few months the bailiffs were in it and the furniture out.

16. And it was yet an age of colour and costume, when Lord Villiers, who "fashioned away" his fortune, could come to Court in a "pale purple velvet turned up with lemon colour and embroidered all over with 'SS' of pearls big as peas, and in all the spaces little medallions in beaten gold . . . in various figures of cupids and the like"—when Warren Hastings himself appeared at his trial in puce satin and with a diamond-hilted sword; when Lord Egmont's postillions (for servants were still gentlemen's gentlemen) wore white jackets trimmed with muslin, "and new ones every other day"; when up to the eighties youths of fashion carried "white satin muffs" such as Fox loved in his days of dandyism, and Sheridan sent for after his elopement; when, too, with intervals up to the nineties the ladies' headdresses were so high that a pantomime at Drury Lane exhibited Harlequin scaling a ladder to reach them, and

[1] Cf. Lady H. Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 69.

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beauties were entitled "cloud-capped belles."[1] Mrs. Tickell's letters to her sister teem with criticisms on the magnificence of Mrs. Siddons' stage-costumes. Show and shows marked off the nobleman from the mob, and occasioned theatrical effects very different to the soberer dress and more familiar manners of thirty years later than "The School for Scandal." All the wares of Autolycus were in evidence. The powdered hair, the sword, the folding hat, the embroidered coat, the pink heels, lace ruffles and rattan cane, proclaimed the man of breeding who, to be in fashion, must dance well, fence well, and air his repartees with his snuff. The private theatricals reflected the public ostentation. Lord Barrymore, who paid sixty thousand pounds for a building to house his audience, performed buffoon dances and acted "Scaramouch." Fox in his boyhood had been converted to politics by the fire which overtook the Thespians at Winterslow. Lord Villiers acted "Pygmalion and the Statue" in a barn near Henley.[2] Yet to the people peers were still demi-gods, and the luckless Lord Ferrers drove in state to the gallows and was hanged with a silken rope in his silver-embroidered wedding suit. If Sheridan loved pageants, pageantry flashed all around him.

It was an age at once precious and brutal, of taste and turbulence. Dainty Mrs. Montague, the great friend of Sheridan's mother,[3] presides over the "Cupidon" saloon which cost

[1] Cf. a poem on Bath in the "Annual Register" for 1777. These adornments were a revival of the earlier "Fontanges" (see the Nat. Portrait Gallery painting of Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland). In Sheridan's first MS. version of "The School for Scandal" he had a line about a headdress which he afterwards omitted—"a headdress to o'ertop Lady Pagoda's pendant, horizontal and perpendicular." He satirises the fashion in his prologue to "The Trip to Scarborough," and in his "St. Patrick's Day" the hero observes of the headgear that it is "turret on turret" on top "with stores of concealed weapons under pretence of black pins, and above all a standard of feathers that would do honour to a Knight of the Bath. Upon my conscience, I could as soon embrace an Amazon armed at all points" (Act I., Sc. I.). Anstey, too, makes fun of the tall *toupée* that catches fire in his "Inkle Letters." Marie Antoinette's love of these enormities was much scathed.

[2] Cf. Doran's "In and about Drury Lane," Vol. II., p. 125.

[3] Cf. "Memoir of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," p. 93.

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thousands, discoursing all night of Shakespeare and the musical glasses to a circle that comprises Dresden china like the Duchess of Devonshire and cast-iron like Dr. Johnson, while her poor, mathematical husband has retired to kindly rest and oblivion.[1] Outside, brawl chairmen and linkmen; cityward, lurk footpads and ruffians, outcasts of every sort and gradation—all the scum which the Gordon riots upheaved. Or, a few years earlier, young members of Parliament on a hot May night vote against their opinions for fear that heat may melt their rouge and wither their nosegays, while in the galleries above them the sturdier wine-bibbers snore lustily.[2] Lord North—who, once taxed by a dull speaker with being asleep, answered that he wished to Heaven he were—steps carelessly across the benches and unhooks old Welbore Ellis's court sword. Burke rises to speak in volumes, and is coughed down by the curt sons of Belial.[3]

"Hell-gate" Lord Barrymore—whose amiable kindred (one of them a clergyman) were nicknamed respectively "Cripplegate," "Newgate," and "Billingsgate"—plays beau in St. James' or mohawk in St. Giles', and rides "into the hunting-field more like a King of France and Navarre than an English gentleman," while his negro-trumpeters play fantasias in the forest. Finical *dilettanti* buy spurious Titians and collect curios that image their surroundings. One of these *cognoscenti*

[1] His collieries defrayed her expenses. Her dressing-room was frescoed with roses and jessamine. Of what good were the cupids to a middle-aged woman, railed Mrs. Delany "unless she looks upon herself as the wife of old Vulcan and mother to all these little loves."

[2] Cf. "The Rolliad" (edn. 1795, p. 36):

"Till full of claret, down with wild uproar,
You reel, and, stretch'd along the gallery, snore."

And cf. *ibid.* (1st edn., 1784, p. 417): "We balloted among ourselves for a sleeping committee in the gallery."

[3] Cf. "The Rolliad" (edn. 1784), p. 417, and Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 298, which notes the "smoking and spitting" party got up to annoy Burke in the House, and headed by Rolle. Lord North's joke was years later rivalled by Lord Ellenborough, who, on seeing a Whig member yawn at the speech of a Whig bore, observed that while the yawn showed the yawner's taste, it was hardly fair thus to encroach on the province of the other side.

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brandishes aloft a tooth of Scipio Africanus, swearing to fix it in his own gums, while George Selwyn, the wit of graveyards and executions,[1] wonders that "such a thing could come into anybody's *head*."[2] Swearing itself grows coxcombical, and Lord Hertford's "By Jove!" explains Sheridan's "Damns have had their day," though even the greatest ladies, provoked by politics, could swear in public.[3]

In that fancy fair of the ebbing century what incongruous oddments confront us! Freaks, like the two-headed cow, side by side with outlandish lions like Omai the Otaheitan, whom Reynolds painted, Drury Lane pantomimed, and fencing-master Angelo with Chevalier D'Eon once accompanied, caracoling all the way from Acton up Oxford Street. Poor Omai had to doff his feathers and sport a cocked hat to match the headgear of his companions, and in this absurd trim he and his refractory steed stopped dead at the Pantheon, where they stood the laughing stock of a jeering crowd. Double *rôles* are not confined to the two-headed cow. Here are bruising and playwriting parsons like Bate Dudley and O'Beirne, afterwards bishop; free-thinking parsons like that chameleon pagan, Lord Bristol, Bishop of Derry (and of Bohemia); Jacobin persons like Horne Tooke; doctors who are musicians and astronomers, a player who is an aeronaut, gentleman actors, and actor-gentlemen;[4] noblemen half on the stage, the veterans of which are public-school men; though Dr. Johnson once asked Garrick in contempt if Punch (which he pronounced "Ponch") could "have feelings." There are whole booths of *bric-à-brac*. We can see Treves (or "Travis"), the clever Jew who financed Carlton House, and Weltje, its prince of *chefs*, who patronised artists and opera singers, and

[1] In January, 1788, when Selwyn's daughter was presented at Court, the King said that Selwyn would not stay out the ceremony of knighting a man from the country, because it looked so like an execution. Cf. Lord Auckland's "Journal," Vol. II, p. 210.

[2] The Duchess of Devonshire mentions this in one of her letters.

[3] In 1784. Cf. *post*, Vol. II., Ch. III.

[4] In a letter of 1785 Mrs. Tickell tells her sister that Frank North is quite an actor, and John Kemble quite a gentleman.

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charged Sheridan six shillings a pound for apricot jam and three guineas apiece for Perigord pies. And there is Gallini, the impresario who married Lord Abingdon's sister, and "Jew King," the smart money-lender who wedded Lord Lanesborough's widow, the daughter-in-law of Sheridan's godfather. There also is mad Becky Wells, the laughtersome comedian who molested Mrs. Crewe and Miss Burney by dogging their footsteps round a picture gallery, and annoyed King George by staring at him from a row-boat. And there may be seen lorn "George Anne" Bellamy, highborn actress and low adventuress, sitting sentimentally, a would-be suicide, in the midnight darkness on Westminster Bridge. One step onward and we reach the Macaronis with their long curls and spying glasses. They were not a long-lived race, and the only one that survives is perhaps Sheridan's Sir Benjamin Backbite. We can almost scent the pouncet of the fop who provoked caustic old Quin to dispatch the Bath ordinary's waiter in disgust for a basin.

Sensation hobnobs with "sensibility." There is the craze for balloons[1] which enabled Lunardi to play gallant to a duchess; and the craze for animal magnetism when all the world flocked to Dr. Maineduc. There is the craze for "Ambigu" suppers.[2] There is the silly craze for vying in dressed dolls or idols, which the fashionable of both sexes dandled in the Park. There is the grim craze moreover for making a gazing-stock of the scaffold. Grandees turn waiters for a morning to secure the best view from a tavern of polite criminals like the freebooter Maclaine,[3] the Rev. Dr. Dodd, or those Perreaus whose gruesome story suggested Thackeray's "Catherine." They pass to eternity, these bedizened malefactors with their *cortège* of mourning coaches, mock heroes in mock state; while men who go least

[1] Elizabeth Sheridan, in one of her letters, describes the excitement over the balloon at the Pantheon, which in 1785 ascended horsed by four imitation eagles.

[2] So called from being half dinners. Sir G. Elliot attended one which followed a dance (after tea) to the strains of the harpsichord and under the blaze of silver lights.

[3] Cf. Taylor's "Records," Vol. I., p. 62, and Mr. Thomas Seccombe's "Twelve Bad Men."

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to church, as was said, repair oftenest to Newgate chapel. Next night finds the same fribbles figuring with equal nonchalance at Ranelagh, or masquerading in domino at the Pantheon, which has now succeeded to Madame Corneilly's more dubious Arcadia. Newgate or Tyburn, Ranelagh or Vauxhall, Foley or Marylebone Gardens, it is all the same—a maze of mumming.

Countless are the specimens. We can wonder at Soubise, the adopted black page (when black pages were the mode) of Gay's and Prior's fair Duchess of Queensberry, flourishing still powerful in a green old age. A dashing negro, this "young Othello," who penned verses, killed hearts, went the pace, and died training Arab horses in India for Warren Hastings' discreet witness, "Memory" Middleton. Nor are we least astounded by that great enigma, the Chevalier D'Eon himself, friend of Sheridan, Wilkes, General Paoli,[1] and of that luckless King of Corsica who died a pauper in Soho. Once a dragoon under Broglio, still proud to wear his red uniform with pea-green lapels and silver lace, a wit and scholar, a paragon at feats of arms and horsemanship, the pensioner and agent of the French Government, and probably a pensioner of the British Minister also, always a problem, always a gentleman, even when crossing swords with Mrs. Battiman, the lady fencer—D'Eon, who lived a soldier and expired in petticoats.[2] Nor should we omit the masterful Pitts, Lord Camelford, dare-devil and Crœsus-philanthropist, who rivalled Sheridan in his vagaries, and his Amazonian cousin, Lady Hester Stanhope, who was pointed to by the King as his best minister and general, kept Pitt's house,

[1] For Paoli as an inspirer of freedom in England, cf. "The Complaint of Liberty" (1768).

[2] In 1777 Garrick, in his correspondence, is found very curious as to D'Eon's sex. He was latterly called "Madame D'Eon." In 1792 he received both Jacobin conspirators and noble *émigrés*. Plied with questions as to his politics and sex, he kept his counsel impenetrably. Cf. "Hist. Man. Comm., Fortescue MS.," Vol. II., p. 355. There is an allusion to him in "The Camp," which was written by Tickell, assisted by Sheridan, and acted at Drury Lane in 1778. "He looks so French and so finical that I thought he ran a risk of being mistaken for another female chevalier." He is amongst the subscribers for M. Delille's French translation of Sheridan's "School for Scandal" (1789) as "Mdlle. D'Eon."

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snubbed and ruled the world, and, after unparalleled vicissitudes, fell under the influence of the would-be Messiah, Brothers, and died haggling over a pension in Syria. Quite as eccentric was her father, Lord Stanhope, a patrician Jacobin with the face of an Italian cardinal, who shocked his friends by sleeping with open windows under twelve blankets, and studying science in a home that the King called "Democracy Hall." Educated at Geneva, where he imbibed republican principles, he was the Algernon Sydney of the sympathisers with the French Revolution. Sheridan knew him well, and he is thus hit off in "The Rolliad," which Sheridan helped to inspire though he was not a direct contributor:

> "The Quixote of the nation
> Beats his own windmills in gesticulation.
> To strike, not please, his utmost thoughts he bends
> And all his sense is at his fingers' ends."

Each of these was as proud as Lucifer, nor least the last. "Indeed, all the democrats that I have known," wrote his daughter, "were nothing but aristocrats at heart. . . . Even Horne Tooke was not a democrat, of that I am sure."[1] There are no bounds to the native paradox and audacious licence of the eighteenth century.

17. Indiscipline prevails, and even children elope from their parents;[2] while maidservants will sometimes shock their mistresses, as did once Mrs. Tickell's, by appearing "with powdered hair, two large curls, and a fly-cap." Gallantries are as much *de rigueur* as in the coarser Restoration carnival, and the Duchess of Devonshire was assured by one of her correspondents that he had "no right to flatter himself on being excluded from the general combination against husbands."[3] In Vanbrugh's sarcasm, it was "a well-bred age, thank Heaven, and a deal of civility, there passed between the sexes."[4] Sheridan has been

[1] Lady H. Stanhope's "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 374.

[2] Cf. among the "Blues" the conduct of Mrs. Piozzi's daughters; and of Mrs. Cholmondeley's, mentioned by Mrs. Tickell in a letter of 1784.

[3] Devonshire House MSS.

[4] "Æsop," Act V., Sc. I.

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represented as wading through as many bundles of *billets-doux* as bills. Rae, however, has exploded the significance of a bagful recovered, it was rumoured, by stratagem. That Sheridan was at times inconstant is hinted by his own letters, but it is only known from a single instance recorded in a letter-journal of his younger sister.[1] The first Mrs. Sheridan deplored this lapse in some touching verses which she inscribed in an album kept in 1782, at Harrow. How full and frank was her pardon is shown by the two concluding stanzas:

"Yet when my fancy calls to mind
Thy tender looks, thy words so kind,
Hope through my tears shall shine,
And whisper, though the love of power
And conquest claims the present hour,
A future will be mine.

Nature, that formed thy generous heart,
Meant not it ever should impart
A grief it did not own.
He formed it tender, kind and true;
Though fairer objects tempt thy view,
That heart is *mine* alone."[2]

Mrs. Tickell, however, throughout her letters to her sister, insists that Sheridan is "a good boy" and answers for his behaviour when he dances attendance on Mrs. Crewe. But other and grander ladies soon joined his train. In 1786, when the Sheridans stayed at Chatsworth, Mrs. Tickell thus teases both him and her sister: "How I laughed at S. not being in time for my lady duchess. Oh, dear! what a fine name would hers have been at the head of his list of captives. Oh, my dear sir! you ought to have had eyes at your fingers' ends on that royal morn." Only two years later, when Sheridan's fame was at its

[1] LeFanu MSS., and Rae's "Sheridan," Vol. II., p. 138. It has been said that it refers to Mrs. Crewe, and we know from a letter of Sheridan to the Duchess of Devonshire (cf. the second note of the next page), as well as from mentions in Elizabeth Sheridan's letters, that by 1788 (and indeed 1786) his passion for "Amoret," as she was named, had completely cooled.

[2] Cf. Rae, p. 137. The two opening stanzas, "Ah! while when anguish rends the heart," etc., are misquoted by Smyth in his "Memoir." He was shown this album, which still exists, by Mrs. Stratford Canning.

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height, Elizabeth Sheridan describes the lover-like attentions of the same fascinatress and her sister at a masquerade, though she intimates that the hero of the hour disregarded them. The subject will again be treated of afterwards. That which really charmed Sheridan was beauty combined with intellect.

Whatever the extent of his peccadillo—and its date was probably 1778—Lothario was absolved, and that he was grateful will be shown by his delicate consideration for his good angel in a strange episode that happened twenty-one years later. Nor do his philanderings seem to have been seriously blamed even by his wife's confidante, Mrs. Stratford Canning, while, though he consorted with a dissolute Prince, he does not seem to have shared his orgies. If, in a libertine age, he sometimes wandered in those Armida-bowers where cicisbeos abounded, his heart stayed in the home which he revered even when he most neglected it. Through the whole range of his letters to his second wife and his answers to her complaints, it is clear that jealousy was not one of them. More than this, he will be found expressing a real remorse in the striking avowals made to Lady Bessborough and her sister when the thought of his first wife's impending death had quite unnerved him.[1] It was the refinements and glamour of intrigue that Sheridan courted, not the debasement of passion, which indeed he scorned even in his earliest letters. But he loved plot, and underplot, and mystery, and moonlight—the whole scenery of Beaumarchais' stage. That such were his flirtations may be seen from a contemporary passage in Lord Minto's correspondence, which indicates after what manner Sheridan risked the reputation of being a gallant.[2] It was the Shandeian manner, that of the

[1] "Wrong passions and pursuits." Cf. his letter-journal to the Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Bessborough transcribed in the Appendix to Vol. II. (4).

[2] In 1789 the then Sir Gilbert Elliot, after noticing the vogue in high circles for gallantry, writes of Sheridan: "He employs a great deal of art with a great deal of pains *to gratify not the proper passion in such affairs, but vanity;* and he deals in the most intricate plotting and underplotting, like a Spanish play." Cf. "Life and Letters of the First Lord Minto," Vol. I., p. 312. The view above taken of Sheridan's attitude is further borne out

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sentimentalist actor, of the Pierrot that Sheridan was. Towards the close of the century Lady Holland notes in her Journal that "before women Sheridan plays a part." But from an unprinted piece of that Journal we also learn that the prim Elliot did not stop at playing a part, but could be gross as the worst; "a nice man," in Swift's words, is occasionally "a man of nasty ideas."

It was certainly not a squeamish age, though the romp of animal spirits runs through all its licence and real fun blends with a frivolity born of appetite, not of languor. Elopements,[1] duels, and intrigues follow fast on one another, and fashion pants to drain the cup of life to the dregs, as Fox admitted in a poem that he had succeeded in doing.[2] A future archbishop—the archbishop chosen by George III. in defiance of Pitt—ranks among the delinquents, while Lord Southampton's son decamped with a bishop's daughter.[3] There is much low life above stairs, and Mayfair imports everything from France but the *finesse* of her manners, combining, as Thackeray puts it, "the morals of Richelieu with the elegance of Dutch Sam." Fox was considered "much improved" in the early nineties, from the days when he "spat on Lord Shelburne's carpet"; the Duke of York turned the Duchess of Gordon out of the Pantheon supper-room for rudeness to his Lady

by a statement in a letter of his to the Duchess of Devonshire, three years earlier, where, speaking of Mrs. Crewe, he says: "I believe she feels that my heart is shut against her." Cf. "The Two Duchesses," p. 112.

[1] Even so late as 1788 Lord Charles Somerset ran away to Scotland with Miss Courtenay; "Fish" Crawford's natural daughter eloped at Paris, and a journeyman barber was on the point of running away with Princess Elizabeth. Cf. "Lord Auckland's Journal and Corr.," Vol. II., pp. 210 *et seq.*

[2] "That I've felt each reverse that from Fortune can flow,
That I've tasted each bliss that the happiest know."
The verses are on Mrs. Crewe, and a copy of them is among the Sheridan MSS.

[3] Charles Manners-Sutton is the first instance; Laura Keppel, the Bishop of Exeter's daughter, who ran away in 1784 with George Fitzroy, is the second.

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Tyrconnel,[1] while the Whig and Tory duchesses hissed each other as they entered a drawing-room.[2]

And never was there a day when the spheres and avocations of men and women were nearer in some directions and further in others.[3] Rousseau was in the air, and the laxity was extreme. Beauty and talent, yoked to tyranny or indifference, kicked over the traces, at a time when, as Chesterfield said in a *mot* miscredited to Sheridan, "Everybody's son married nobody's daughter." A queen and two princesses had paid for indiscretion or contumacy by durance vile in continental fortresses.[4] Mysterious children appear suddenly, exchanged by their mothers, returned to their fathers, or screened in convenient dower-houses. Lovers are rife, but love dwindles, and any gust of real passion soon dashes all the porcelain swains and shepherdesses to fragments. The sense of home is far fainter than it was fifty years earlier; but the Duchess of Devonshire, though she moves distracted between literature and licence, does set the example of nursing her babies, which was followed later by Mrs. Siddons, to the derision of the Drury Lane green-room. Domesticity appealed to Sheridan, who emphasised it in his epilogue to "The Rivals":

> "The poorest peasant of the poorest soil,
> The child of poverty and heir to toil,

[1] The Fox instance was told by Priestley to Rogers. Cf. Clayden's "Early Life of S. Rogers," p. 245. For further instances, cf. *post*, Vol. II., Chap. 3.

[2] This scene is described by Elizabeth Sheridan in one of her letters. LeFanu MSS. For the other, cf. Lord Auckland's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 212.

[3] All this was sheer Rousseauism. Cf. "La femme et le mari sont bien destinés à vivre ensemble mais non pas de la même manière," etc. Nouvelle Héloise, partie 3me, Lettre XIV. A favourite song at Vauxhall was "Female Liberty Regained," a refrain of which was:

> "Then stand to your charter and let the world see
> Tho' husbands are tyrants, their wives will be free."

Cf. "The Modern Siren" (1781), p. 4.

[4] Christina of Denmark and Elizabeth Christina, first wife of Frederick William II. of Prussia. Princess Elizabeth of Taxis was also immured by her brother, the Duke of Würtemberg.

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Early from radiant Love's impartial light
Steals one small spark to cheer this world of night:
Dear spark! that oft through winter's chilling woes
Is all the warmth his little cottage knows."

18. And women played a prominent part not only in the arts and literature but in philanthropy and politics. Sheridan's mother paved the way for Miss Burney. Mrs. Cowley, Mrs. Inchbald, and the "wild" Lady Wallace were tolerable playwrights. Mrs. Barbauld, Miss Edgeworth's precursor and Madame de Genlis' contemporary, was the first real writer for children. The French Revolution ushered in the woman's age and the woman's standpoint, so that Thomas Paine's "Rights of Man" was matched by Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin's "Rights of Women." Helen Maria Williams was a muse of Jacobinism not only in England but in France.

19. As the madcap century quickens towards its close, charlatans abound, free-livers, free-lovers, freebooters multiply; nor is there any check to the seesaw of adventure and fortune. Fortune-hunting is a profession and heiress-brokers abet it. Charles Fox himself is duped by Mrs. Grieve, who offers him Miss Phipps the West Indian. She makes him powder his dark eyebrows, and swells her *clientèle* by driving showily to great houses and parleying with flunkeys who mimic their masters, just as Fag in "The Rivals" and Trip in "The School for Scandal" imitate theirs. Foote worked up this episode in his "Cozeners," as he afterwards worked up that of Miss Linley and her elderly lover Long, in his "Maid of Bath." The stage-lights of the theatre show up the scandals and artifice of the whole Comedy of Errors.

20. The Georgian era was a carnival of the animal man. Its faults and follies will enable us to decide whether Sheridan was worse or better than his contemporaries in an age when worth exceeded virtue. But the century that began with Bolingbroke and somehow ended in giving birth to Shelley, displayed high virtues also. It was virile. The statesmen of those days ran

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real risks and staked more on their game than place or the partisanship which made Whigs and Tories of generals and admirals. Though the time for political scaffolds was past, proscription still lingered. Lord North was nearly impeached, Rodney would have been so but for his victory over De Grasse. Rolle threatened impeachment for Sheridan and Sheridan for Auckland. Impeachment was deliberately chosen for Warren Hastings, nor did the wary Dundas escape it; even later it almost fell to the lot of Wellesley and his great brother. All along, a concentration of energy stamps the period. A sense pervades it of national and intellectual strain, of hard thinking and hard fighting as well as of hard living. And through all its hurly-burly, sound the still, small voices which after all are the strongest, and shame the paganism which they purify. In Sheridan's childhood the Wesleys awaken conscience and a consciousness of the soul, not only by the wayside and in the market-place, but in hothouse drawing-rooms and drowsy Georgian chapels. Polished cynics thrill and tremble as Whitefield dramatises the sinner on the brink of his precipice. Cowper, morbid yet radiant, hymns the pieties of home, and lends a quietude to his indignation against the pampered, and enthusiasm for the humble. Raikes founds the Sunday schools; Benezet, Dillwyn, Clarkson and Wilberforce successively arraign the accepted traffic in man. Self-made capitalists surrender their wealth to the poor. Howard visits all Europe, not, in Burke's noble words, "to survey the sumptuousness of palaces . . . nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern art, not to collect medals or collate manuscripts; but to dive into the depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals, to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain . . . to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries." Mrs. Fry ministers like an angel in English prisons; Hannah More dedicates her social gifts to reform society. The great Doctor —at once rude and gentle—crowns reason with a halo. These, and others like these, give voice and heart and hope to a

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driven and long-suffering people; while over all, sounds the clarion of music, humanising and consecrating without dogmatising or denouncing.

The latter phases of the eighteenth century present a battle between experience and experiment, and the seeming triumph of common sense over enthusiasm. But with the sole exception of England's national grapple with Jacobinism, it was in appearance only. Common sense upheld a property in slaves; uncommon sense, enthusiasm, has conquered. Common sense resisted Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform; enthusiasm which scorned to be panic-stricken, has vindicated justice. Common sense kicked against freeing the trade of Ireland from the English Navigation Laws, and suffered many things in consequence. With common sense indeed enthusiasm is in constant collision during the last three decades of the century. For these may be regarded as the tribunal before which the dominant causes were mooted and argued. That vast audience-chamber heard the contest for national existence, the pleas of the old and the new worlds, of reform and emancipation, of empire and responsibility, of parliament and prerogative, of the throne and the people. In all these Sheridan played his part. It is for the following pages to represent how and with whom he played it.

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LONDONDERRY HOUSE, BATH

(for nearly two years the abode of the Sheridans),

from a photograph

(in the possession of the Dowager Marchioness of Dufferin).

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CHAPTER I

BATH UNIVERSITY—AND A RETROSPECT

"But pray, Mr. Fag, what kind of a place is this Bath?"
SHERIDAN, "*Rivals*," Act I., Sc. I.

"The past is one of the elements of our power."
DISRAELI, *Speech on the death of Cobden.*

SHERIDAN was truly a licentiate of Bath; he was allowed no other university. And though his sojourn there fell short of two years, it came at the most impressionable hour of youth and enabled him to absorb all the light learning of a place which was at once an epitome of London and a rehearsal for it. There he attended every lecture in the faculties of fashion, studied every style except the epic, dabbled in verse and prose, and became master of arts in the alma mater of *laissez-faire*. It has often been wondered how Sheridan came by his dramatic mastership. Bath is the answer. "Lord!" exclaims Lady Brute in Vanbrugh's "Provoked Wife," "what should put such a thing into your head?" "That which puts things into most people's heads," is the reply—"observation." Sheridan was born observant, and in no place could observation better take and measure the stage. Bath permeates his whole career. His plays were founded on its experience, his wit was trained in its assemblies, his fortunes decided by its events. It made him a precocious man of the world, supplied him with patterns of satire, afforded him the first vent for romantic passion and the first opportunities for literary effort. Bath breathes in all his characters. "The Rivals" is Bath humorised, "The School for Scandal," though London is its nominal scene, is Bath satirised, there is a whiff of Bath even in "The Duenna." At Bath his father lectured on eloquence and took pupils from the "nobility and gentry." Bath opened his intimacy with Tickell and the Breretons, Thomas Grenville and Windham, his

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friendship with Ozias Humphry the artist, who was to forward his first election, and with Gainsborough, whom eighteen years later he followed to the grave; it gave him his first entry on the behind-scenes both social and theatrical; above all, his association with those wonderful Linleys round whose talent in 1771 Bath may be almost said to have converged. Sheridan's whole life may be foreshadowed as idiomatic of Bath.

On the morning of Saturday, January 19, 1771, about half an hour before noon, a nonchalant youth might have been seen strolling towards Simpson's, one of the "lower" assembly rooms, which were then the twin attractions of the city. Gyde was to be its proprietor ("Gyde's porch" finds place in "The Rivals") as Wiltshire was to be of its fellow, and both stood alone till the last day of the next September, when the "divine" voice of Elizabeth Linley, soon made the new "upper" rooms eclipse their predecessors.[1]

Our friend who had only turned nineteen in the preceding autumn, looked older than his years. He wore the cocked hat and scarlet waistcoat that were the latest mode, but he was a man every inch, with no trace of the fop about him. Despite Lady Cork's adverse verdict of some fifty years onwards, he was then a personable and, some deemed, a handsome stripling. "Handsome, bold and clever," are the words of one idolising sister; "generally allowed to be so," those of the other.[2] Wear

[1] Cf. Mr. Meehan's article in the *Bath "Beacon"* for September, 1898. By 1775 however, Anstey, satirising the lower rooms in his "Inkle Letters" about the Election ball, could still write,

"And invite to the low rooms the nobles to supper,
While folks of no fashion drink tea at the upper" (p. 30).

[2] "He was handsome not merely in the eyes of a partial sister, but generally allowed to be so. His cheeks had the glow of health, his eyes, the finest in the world, the brilliancy of genius, as soft and tender as an affectionate heart could render them. . . ." A strange mistake in this connection should be at once cleared up. This excerpt comes from a long manuscript account forwarded to Sheridan's widow for Moore's biography. It has always been given out as the work of Sheridan's *younger* sister Mrs. Elizabeth LeFanu, but in fact it was written by the elder sister Mrs. Alicia LeFanu. The account itself ought to have disclosed its real

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and tear had not yet coarsened his features or lent them to caricature. His figure above middle height, though inclined to stoop, gave an upright impression. The arms were thin but muscular, and the frame was powerful. His forehead, intellectual, but somewhat receding at the temples, was rather broad than high. A tangle of wavy hair, brown beneath its powder, clustered round it, while below strongly marked eyebrows the large, dark pupils on their blue-grey foundation shone piercing and luminous. The nose, slightly curved at its rise, turned up crisply at the tip, while the nostrils were sharply chiselled. The mouth was red and well arched, pouting in the centre, but with twinkling corners. The upper lip was rather long, the lower inclined to fulness; the jaw was big and the chin heavy, but indented. His cheeks glowed with health, and about the whole countenance lurked an air of watchfulness in ambush, contrasting somewhat with its freshness, and alternating with fits of dreamy abstraction.[1] Thus, as authentic sources present him,

authorship to biographers, for besides other internal evidence, it mentions the marriage of the sister Elizabeth from Sheridan's roof in 1789. The mistake arose from a slip of Moore in first quoting the document as by Mrs. *E.* LeFanu, though he rightly calls her the "elder" sister. Mr. Rae, thus misled, attributes it to the younger, and so have the rest, and Mr. J. P. LeFanu has kindly written to the writer authoritatively confirming his opinion. The point is material, for on the face of it, it would be unlikely that Elizabeth, a girl of only thirteen at the time of the facts narrated, could recall them with such particularity as her elder sister, who was five years her senior. The other citation comes from Miss LeFanu's statement derived from her mother in the "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan."

[1] Cf. for the foregoing a note to "Clio's Protest," as to his costume as "a very young man"; Sheridan's younger sister's words in her niece's "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan"; his elder sister's statement forwarded to Sheridan's widow in 1816, the description in Eg. MS. 1975, f. 184; Madame D'Arblay's "Diary," Vol. I., p. 120; and Moore's "Journal," *passim*, where in one place the thinness yet strength of his arms is mentioned by Dr. Bain. For some interesting details as to colour and features, I am indebted to Mr. Milner of the National Portrait Gallery, who has furnished full particulars of a Romney portrait sold at Christie's in April, 1895. The dark brown colour in the eyes of Russell's crayon is very questionable, and is not borne out by other authentic portraits. Lady Cork told Moore that she thought him ugly and awkward ("Journal," Vol. II., p. 335)—Lady Cork who was said to have stood in her age for "Lady

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looked the youth, who now quickened his footsteps, for he was about to hear the voice of one whom already he admired in secret beyond every living and every singing creature. Winter lay on the ground, but spring ruled in his heart, the spring of life and love and careless adventure.

He was bound for a concert-room where his father, the pompous and indefatigable gentleman-actor and author, the teacher and exemplar of elocution, had advertised recitations and a discourse on the powers of rhetoric "with a view to the improvement of human nature." Poor old Sheridan, such were his "Attic entertainments!" Oratory, he thought, offered a specific for every ill on earth. Declamation, pronunciation, emphasis, but be it also said advanced education, occupied the days and nights of one who, thirteen years earlier, had divided the honours of the London stage with Garrick, and a year later could still enthral Dublin with his "King John" and "Cato." But his art was of the old school, sonorous and formal, while his voice was that of one crying in a wilderness of pleasure-seekers. He needed youth and radiance to commend it, and he found both in the genius of Elizabeth Ann Linley, eldest daughter of Thomas Linley, director of provincial oratorios and now of the Bath concerts.

She had barely turned sixteen.[1] And though for over four years

Bellair" in "Henrietta Temple" and "Mrs. Leo Hunter" in "Pickwick." But another informant considered Sheridan and his bride "a handsome couple"; while Miss Burney, some eight years later, allowed him "a good though I don't think a handsome face," and praised his upright stature and an address "at once manly and fashionable without the smallest tincture of modish graces."

[1] "The Dictionary of National Biography" assigns September, 1754, as the month of her birth, and we know from the registers that she was baptised on the 25th of that month at St. Michael's Church, so that she was not born at Pierpoint Street in St. James' parish, as generally asserted. In one of Mrs. Tickell's MS. letters to her sister of the summer of 1784, speaking of Mrs. Sheridan's age and saying that she is still "the prettyest (*sic*) and youngest looking woman of all your set," she continues, "so don't be cast down, for it's a good while yet to another *7th of September*." This, with the date in her register of baptism, September 25, 1754, establishes the day of her birth. But strangely enough the same letter

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Mrs. SHERIDAN (shortly after her marriage)
from the original water-colour drawing by Ozias Humphry
(in the possession of Algernon Sheridan, Esquire).

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already an enchantress of the public and exposed to the rude gaze of mankind, she remained the "most modest, pleasing and delicate flower" in Nature's garden, as voluptuary-Wilkes styled her when he dined with the family in the following year. She had trodden a thorny path without contamination. Purity and beauty embodied, she consecrated her art to the strains of that Handel whom her sister Maria died singing, whom their father revered and resuscitated, and after whom he christened his eldest son. "For sure," sang Tickell, urging Sheridan's rhapsodies,

> "For sure the sweetest lay she well may claim
> Whose soul breathes harmony o'er all her frame."

She was indeed one, to quote Sheridan's "Duenna," "who speaks in song, who moves in light." In after years a bishop termed her the connecting link between mortals and angels; a statesman, who said the same, sat up half the night to hear her; the King himself hung on her every tone. And her voice was an emblem of herself. Contemporaries unite in hyberbole. Parr, Sheridan's old schoolmaster, always spoke of her as more than human, while the musician Jackson of Exeter owned that "her countenance while singing was like nothing earthly." Calibans stood abashed at this Miranda. The evil-minded Pasquin was awed into respect by her presence, and when she helped Fox in the Westminster Election of 1784 obscene pamphleteers

would almost seem to put back her birthday to mid-July, for it states that her sister is "only three years and a half" her senior, and we know from another passage that Mrs. Tickell's birthday was January 4, 1758. Writing on that day in 1786, she says playfully, "For 'tis my Lady's birthday and therefore we'll keep holiday. So to-day I am thirty years old, all but wanting two years—two from ten and there remains eight, you know. I daresay you will not think of it except the Concert Bill should remind you." The "half," however, in the first letter must be used loosely. Otherwise the date of her birth as mid-July would be corroborated by the inscription which the late Lord Dufferin caused to be put over the site of the vault in Wells Cathedral, where she, her father, sister, and infant daughter lie buried. The record there is "died July 7th, 1792, aged thirty-eight." That Mrs. Tickell, however, could trip in her chronology is patent from another letter, certainly of 1785, where she again refers to her sister's birth as "twenty-two and a half years" ago.

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not only spared her, but were hushed in admiration.[1] Don John's words in Vanbrugh's "False Friend" portray her to the life: "Leonora's charms turn vice into virtue, treason into truth. Whatever points at her is pointed right. . . . We are all her due, mankind's the dower which Heaven has settled on her." Though self-taught she was literary, quick, too, in acquiring knowledge, and Charles Fox, who counted himself as a "passionate" admirer, deferred to her fiat on the origin of "the white and red rose" as the badges of York and Lancaster.[2]

[1] Cf. "History of the Westminster Election" (1785), p. 250, and for the preceding instance, cf. Pasquin's "A Crying Epistle of Britannia to General Mack" (1792). "I never beheld her without emotions of respect approaching sublimity," etc. For the other details cf. Almon's "Memoir" of Wilkes; Moore's "Journal," Vol. II.; Minto, "Life and Letters," Vol. I.; Horace Walpole's "Letters"; Moore's "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 158; Dr. Parr's "Life," Vol. II., p. 160; Clayden's "The Early Life of Samuel Rogers," p. 401. The bishop was O'Beirne, and an archbishop also agreed with him. The statesman was Sir G. Elliot, and Lord Palmerston, also three years earlier, in June, 1790, had heard her and Mrs. Tickell at Lady Pembroke's, "singing like angels, nothing can be more enchanting." Madame D'Arblay, when, as Frances Burney, she first met Mrs. Sheridan in 1779, at Mrs. Cholmondeley's, says that she was "clever and very interesting and unlike anybody else," while she notes that Sheridan was "in every way worthy his beautiful companion."

[2] Cf. a most friendly letter of his to Sheridan (evidently of 1782) in the Sheridan MSS. The discussion may have arisen from some anonymous verses presented by George, Duke of Clarence, to the Lancastrian Lady Anne Beauchamp during the war of the Roses. The lines were shown to Sir Walter Scott, and remained unpublished till they were seen by the Rev. J. Richardson, in whose "Recollections" (Vol. II., p. 208) they appear. They deserve repetition:

(*The Duke presents a white rose.*)

"If this fair rose offend your sight,
Placed on your bosom bare,
'Twill blush to find itself less white,
And turn Lancastrian there.
But if thy ruby lips it spy,
To kiss it shouldst thou deign,
With blushes pale 'twill lose its dye
And Yorkist turn again."

Fox writes "My best respects to Mrs. Sheridan, who was right (as she always is) about the origin of the white and red rose."

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In a family of artists she was artistic to the finger tips. Like her sister Mary (afterwards Mrs. Tickell), she sketched as well as sang; like her brother William, she composed delightful verses; like her father and her brother Thomas, she was a skilled instrumentalist; like her future husband, an excellent mimic and impersonator. Gainsborough constantly drew and painted her, he twice modelled her face in clay, and so great was his devotion to this remarkable family that Mrs. Tickell related how, "madder than ever," he had just "taken a little boy of three" into his house, simply because he was "so like the Linleys."[1] Ozias Humphry, the west-country painter who for a time lodged with them, was another of her devotees; and Sir Joshua Reynolds, who cannot be charged with ecstasies, has recorded his intense admiration in a letter preserved among the Sheridan manuscripts. Not only did he twice depict her as St. Cecilia, but she was his model for the Charity in the window of New College, Oxford, and the Virgin in his picture of the Nativity. Cosway, whom she misliked, miniatured her as well as her sister "Polly."[2] She is a face and a presence of her period, at this time almost ethereal, and at all times contemptuous of conventions. Her unconventionality was quite as prominent as her sweetness. Though her father called her "the lady of the soft look and manner," and Garrick dubbed her "the saint," a passive saint she was never. Sensitive, and in girlhood sentimental, she distinguished herself by spirit as well as spirituality. "Your spirits outrun your strength," was one of her sister's last warnings, and in a letter to Sheridan, after his second duel for her sake with her lover Mathews, she vowed that had he not called him out, she would have dressed up as a man herself, and challenged her deceiver. Indeed, in a gay freak she once actually fought a sham duel after a picnic at

[1] (1785). In the same letter Mrs. Tickell says that Gainsborough looked in on her father to see how "old Tommy" was. Among the Sheridan MSS. is a memorandum book of 1806 with names and lists of Sheridan's pictures. In it is the item "Gainsborough's drawings in Mrs. Sheridan's dressing-room." This of course was "Hecca" (Esther or Hester), his second wife.

[2] Cosway also drew her at full length

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Bath with that sister who was the passion of her life—"the twin sister of my heart"—whose end added such a pathos to her own.[1]

The previous year had found her the unenviable centre of a sensation which still agitated Bath. Mr. Walter Long, a Sir Peter Teazle of old Wiltshire family and great wealth, had been added to a succession of pesterers.[2] Mrs. Linley, schooled to save and scrape by poverty, thrust the match on the reluctant girl, some time earlier wearied with the importunities of a Mr. Wilding,[3] and long engaged in a dangerous friendship with a *ci-devant* "captain" but real "ensign." Mathews

[1] This incident is recorded in the Dufferin Papers by a descendant of the Davis family, who were intimates of the Linleys. Mrs. Sheridan's words about her sister come from the record which she placed to preface her sister's letters in the Sheridan MSS.

[2] He was ten years older than Sir Peter. Cumberland, in his epilogue to Foote's "Maid of Bath" calls him:

"A rake of sixty crippled hand and knee,
Who sins on claret and repents on tea."

[3] This worthy is alluded to in this connection by Mrs. Tickell in a letter to her sister which was written in 1784, since it mentions Mrs. Sheridan's marriage in Marylebone Church as "eleven years ago." Mrs. Sheridan had just met "so very old a flame" in the country and was full of the adventure. Her sister says that when he proposed he was as old as her father. We know by an extract from the Linley family Bible among the Sheridan Manuscripts that Thomas Linley the elder was born on January 17, 1733, so that in 1767 the lover would have been thirty-four, not a great age, as things went, for a suitor, though Mrs. Tickell, teasing Mrs. Sheridan about being nearly turned thirty, calls him "old in every sense." I do not think she can be taken seriously when, in her bantering manner, she goes on to declare that Mr. Wilding first paid his addresses to her sister when she (Mrs. Tickell) had just left her school at Wells, "17 or 18 years ago." This would pin his proposal to 1767, when Mrs. Sheridan was only thirteen—a preposterous age, even then, surely for marriage. Mrs. Sheridan herself had written "fourteen years ago," which would make Mr. Wilding her wooer in 1770, the same year in which Mr. Long was. The boarding-school where both Mrs. Sheridan and Mrs. Tickell were brought up till they began to help their father was not in Wells, but near it, "a spot on the side of Brandon Hill," where Mrs. Sheridan and her sister "used to play." The former "wept bitterly" on revisiting it after her sister's death. Cf. the new letters of 1792 from Sheridan to Lady Bessborough and her sister, the Duchess of Devonshire, given in the Appendix to Vol. II.

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was a married rake masquerading as a sentimental platonic: he had known her ever since she stood as a mere child with her basket of concert-programmes, had stolen into her sympathies, and gradually become a habit of her life. To the stern father whom she always loved, she had been bound apprentice till she should come of age, and her talent was already worth an income of quite a thousand a year for the family, whose improving fortunes had just removed them from their small house, number five, Pierpoint Street, to one of the large mansions in the new Crescent. If she must cease to sing, he coveted the compensation of a wealthy husband, and thus the marriage settlements had actually been signed, presents of valuable jewels received, and the Bath gossips gratified with every rumour conceivable. Suddenly, whether by the girl's own tears and entreaties or by there monstrances of Long's relations, or, as is likely, by both, this match of sixteen with sixty was broken off, and the enraged parents threatened the cautious lover with a lawsuit for loss of service. Elizabeth was petrified into stony despair. Shrinking from publicity, she feared the exposure of her correspondence with Mathews, whom she could not help regarding with a pure but passionate attachment. Foote, the comedian, to whom nothing was sacred, chanced to be on the spot, and at once scented an opportunity. Within a year he had utilised the whole story for a play, "The Maid of Bath," which exhibited the girl's innocence, her mother's management, the "captain's" philanderings and the lover's avarice, to the curiosity of a London audience.[1] Mr. Long never rebutted

[1] It was first acted at the Haymarket on June 26, 1771, and the Drury Lane accounts in the Sheridan MSS. show that Sheridan actually revived it there in 1779, when he also revived his mother's comedy, "The Discovery." The characteristics of "Miss Linnet" are given with a particularity that extends to the beauty of her handwriting, and it is very beautiful. One of the characters lodges with them, and the Linleys took lodgers. Old "Solomon Flint" is held up as a miser who will take her to a dull country house, the occupations of which resemble Lady Teazle's. He tells Miss Linnet that her "family is low" and "her fortune just nothing at all," and that when he goes to London he will show her "Boodles and Bedlam." "Major Racket," who is Mathews (he appears under the name of "Rattle"

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these aspersions, though he seems to have behaved handsomely enough, allowing Elizabeth to retain his gifts and presenting her with £3,000 to be settled on her till her majority,—half of which she at once surrendered to her father.[1] All Bath, all London exclaimed against him, and he remained pilloried as Squire Solomon Flint; while Miss Linley, famed hitherto as the "linnet," the "nightingale," and the "siren," was now known everywhere by the title of the comedy. Hapless maid of scandal-mongering Bath! Tears were shed for and by her in plenty as the sordid babble ran its round, and she must often have poured out her heart to her new friends, the Sheridan sisters, "Lissy" (Alicia) a year younger than herself, and "Bessy" (Elizabeth), who was only twelve. These had been her intimates since their arrival at Londonderry House[2] in the autumn, although at first the widower, proud of his lineage, had barely countenanced the friendship of his own daughters with those of his late wife's former music master.[3] This dignity, however, was not too dignified, and when at last Dick Sheridan had won his lady-love, it was said by the conductor of Vauxhall that

in the *brochure* of "Bath Characters," by "Peter Paul Pallet," 1807), is made the betrayer of a "Miss Prim," and on that account rejected by Miss Linnet, cf. *post*, Chap. 4. One of her mother's sentences suggests "The Rivals": "Would you refuse an estate because it happened to be a little encumbered? You must consider the man in this case as a kind of mortgage."

[1] At first Long had paid Mr. Linley £1,000 as compensation. That this sum was trebled soon afterwards seems to show that under the circumstances he either felt himself in the wrong or was eager to get out of the match. He lived to a ripe old age, and must have followed Sheridan's career with interest. Part of the sum surrendered by Mrs. Sheridan to her father seems, from an allusion in one of Mrs. Tickell's letters, to have been restored in 1785. Linley gave a portion to Mrs. Tickell, who refused to keep it.

[2] Number fifty-five, King's Mead Street. A letter from Sheridan senior to his son in December, 1771, is addressed to "New King Street," but Halhed's communications to him from 1770 are addressed to King's Mead Street. Londonderry House was identified as the spot, and fifty-five as the number, when the late Lord Dufferin visited Bath.

[3] In 1764, when the family visited Bath, two years after Richard went to Harrow.

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"the green-room took to picking a quarrel with the orchestra." Already a little storm of intrigue was brewing around the two families. Charles Francis Sheridan, the elder brother, fell head over ears in love with the songstress (and his head was as cool as his ears were attentive); while Dick's Harrow friend, Nathaniel Halhed, now an undergraduate at Christ Church, had lost to her such fragments of a heart as he could spare from other and less celestial charmers.

This was by no means the first time that she had lent her aid to the "Roman Father." She had helped him in London two years earlier, when she was only fifteen, and he was giving his "Attic evenings" in the Haymarket Theatre and at Hickford's Room, Brewer Street.[1] She had assisted him in Bath in the previous November, when the elocutionist as usual undertook the "reading part" and "Miss Linley," the singing. On that occasion he recited Pope's "Verses to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady," two dialogues between Adam and Eve from "Paradise Lost," and "The Hermit" from Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield." She sang "Rosy Bowers" from Purcell, "Black-eyed Susan" and a Scotch ballad; while he also delivered—not without hemming and coughing—his famous phrasing of Dryden's "Alexander's Feast":

> "*None* but the brave,
> None *but* the brave,
> None but the *brave* deserve the fair,"

[1] Cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 135 d. (newspaper cuttings referring to Thomas Sheridan) "Feb. 6, 1769, Attic evenings entertainment, Theatre Royal, Haymarket," on "Thursday last," and other advertisements of his entertainments at Hickford's Room; also of concerts in which the Linleys took part. Also of Sheridan as Richard III., and Hamlet (1769-70), of "Miss Linley" in "Man and Wife," and of Sheridan's elocution classes. The whole family were public performers, the boys from seven years onwards, the girls from eleven. In the preceding year, her sister Mary (Mrs. Tickell) had made her *début* as "Sally" in Colman's "Man and Wife" (an attempt to forestall Garrick's "Jubilee") at Covent Garden, and the advertisement stated that her eldest sister had "lately made a great figure in the musical world as a vocal performer." *Ibid.*, f. 134 d. This appears to have been in a piece called "Fairy Favour," cf. *ibid.* f. 217. The "Roman Father" was one of old Sheridan's parts, and he acted it in London in 1775.

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that excited Dr. Parr's windy approval when Sheridan had visited his son at Harrow,[1] and which exemplified his love of italics. She further sang that Irish ballad of "Eilin a Roon," which young Richard has been already found introducing into a burlesque, while the performance opened with that everlasting "Discourse on Oratory, in which the necessity of that art towards forwarding the perfection of man's nature, is shown in a new light by Mr. Sheridan."[2] The new light had been shining with obscured intervals for years. It went on shining, with small harvest to reward it, for years to come, and only three years before its source vanished from the scene it was still shedding undiminished lustre on London.[3] This performance, which may stand for all, was one of three on Thursdays and Saturdays renewed in January, and accompanied with an advertisement of the lessons which "Mr. Sheridan" was prepared to impart to holiday-pupils at his own house until "a proper place" should be "fitted up for their accommodation."[4] Before the year's close no less a person than George Grenville, subsequently first Marquis of Buckingham (and first pensioner of State), hastened to be cured of his stammer by the rhetorician, and in the summer of the next he boarded in the household together with his tutor Cleaver (afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph) and his brother Thomas, who became Sheridan's lifelong friend. The Linleys continued their connection with

[1] In 1768, when Alicia Sheridan recited it. Cf. Parr's letter to Moore, Moore's "Life of Sheridan," Vol. I., p. 11. This was the date, though it is not there specified. Parr adds, "Whatever may have been the zeal or proficiency of the sister, naughty Richard seemed to care nought for these things." Sheridan senior has given his old theory of expression and enunciation for Dryden's Ode in his "Lectures on the Art of Reading" (1781), at p. 402. His son inherited this fondness for italics about which he was most fastidious in his comedies. For old Sheridan's hemming and coughing and the contrast of his manner with his son's, cf. Angelo's "Reminiscences," Vol. I., p. 299.

[2] Cf. *Bath Chronicle*, November 22, 1770.

[3] He lectured both alone, and with John Henderson, the Bath actor, as assistant, during the Lent season of 1788, in the Freemasons' Hall. Cf. (*inter alia*) Watkins, Vol. I., p. 154.

[4] Cf. *Bath Chronicle*, December 27, 1770.

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Bath (where their grandparents resided), long after they had left it, and so late as 1789 Sheridan's sister Elizabeth, then Mrs. Henry LeFanu, met old Linley over its card-tables.[1]

But while Miss Linley warbles and her lover listens a short ramble must be made through Bath past and present, though it is hard to be torn away from St. Cecilia and her minstrel. For a minstrel he already was, as she was always a poetess—"the tenth muse" Halhed called her;[2] nor was it long since Sheridan had sent her the following strains of pathetic remonstrance against her infatuation for Mathews—stanzas which Thomas Grenville admired beyond measure as breathing the "fixed love and adoration" which soon triumphed over every obstacle to their union:

"Cherub of Heaven! who, from thy secret stand,
Dost note the follies of each mortal here;
Oh! if Emira's steps employ thy hand,
Blot the sad legend with a mortal tear.

Not, when she errs from Passion's wild extreme,
Mark then her course, or heed each trifling wrong;
Not, when her sad attachment is her theme,
Note down the transports of her erring tongue.

But, when she sighs for sorrows not her own,
Let that dear sigh to mercy's call be given;
And bear that tear to her Creator's throne,
That glistens in the eye upraised to heaven."[3]

[1] LeFanu MSS. "Elizabeth to Alicia [Mrs. Joseph] LeFanu, [Bath], Wednesday, [December] 9, 1789."

[2] Halhed's letters to Sheridan from the autumn of 1770 to the late summer of the following year. Sheridan MSS. Perhaps the most beautiful verses by Mrs. Sheridan are the "Lines to my Brother's Violin," her elegy on Thomas Linley, who was drowned in the midst of high promise when he was only twenty-two. These will be given in their place. Cf. *post*, Chap. 6.

[3] Thus the verses originally ran in Mrs. Sheridan's transcript (cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 231, note 1). Another transcript, which agrees with the received version, is on paper watermarked 1816, and stamped with the address of the Bath Upper Rooms. In this copy "Eliza" stands for "Emira," "nor" is put instead of "not," and "mercy's cause" for "mercy's call." Moore gives the date of the lyric as 1770. It has never before been connected with the Mathews episode, but we shall see that in view both of her own statement about the duel and Charles Sheridan's, to the effect that his brother rescued her from Mathews (quite apart from

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And ere long she, too, was to address these simple lines (from a longer series) to him who had then conquered her heart:

"The sweets of solitude to share
With the dear youth I love,
Shall be my only joy and care,
No more I wish to prove.

With him to wander o'er the mead
Which Spring hath newly drest,
And praise the power which thus decreed
We should be truly blest.

* * * *

Should sorrow e'er oppress his heart
And cloud his brow serene,
Though Nature all her sweets impart,
To deck the beauteous scene,

I'll lead him from the noonday heat
Within some leafy bower,
There soothe his soul with concord sweet
Of Music's soothing power.

Or if a book still more amuse
And ease his pensive mind,
Some favourite author will I choose
Till he's to peace resigned."[1]

To call the "British Baiæ" a haunted city is the tamest of platitudes. Bath was in truth the hotel of the eighteenth century. Not a name of note or notoriety is absent from its visitors' book. It was an inn, not a home. People, fame and reputations posted to and from it, stayed in it for a season, and then parted. The serenity of a town bosomed in woody hills and reflected in a silver stream hardly suits the restlessness of this caravan. Its inmates were passengers who flit across the landscape. For strangers and sojourners, the brothers Wood reared those perfect Palladian houses that recall Rome or

Alicia Sheridan's recital), it must refer to it. Among the Sheridan MSS. is also a touching set of verses apparently referring to Mrs. Sheridan's death, which begins "Twin Cherub of Heaven."

[1] Cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 196, note 1. We shall point out later on how these verses were used in another form by Sheridan in his fragmentary draft for "A Drama of Devils."

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Venice, and made it Gibbon's favourite city and Landor's. For pilgrims were built those upper and lower rooms,[1] the first of which survive; that old theatre, replaced in 1748 by the new one in Orchard Street; those vanished gardens (for Bath was a garden city), those now denuded North and South Parades, those once luxurious shops, "all flutter like a lady's fan." There is life in Bath as there is yet life in Pompeii; the scent of roses still hovers round the jar. But *of* Bath no history can be made. History walked through Bath, touched it, dallied in it, and went its way. Only the grey old Abbey lends a sense of permanence, linking the calm of Benedictine hand-looms to the throb of telephones and motor cars, half ignoring the long parenthesis that made the city a mart of pleasure. Yet even so, its tower cannot quite forget the profane interval when loungers hurried straight from the Pump-room to the service, and subscribed in the same book for pews and tables; when frivolity itself was more than once scared by the ruin of innocence or a death at the ball;[2] when forbidden

[1] The "Lower Rooms," which occupied the present site of the Royal Literary and Scientific Society, had been Harrison's, opened in 1708, and Thayer's, in 1728. They were used alternately, and were owned by several successors, Lady Hawley preceding Simpson and Gyde, and Mr. Lindsay preceding Wiltshire, whose name suggests the family of Gainsborough's carrier. They were burned in 1820, and on September 30, 1771, yielded to the "Upper Rooms," built by Wood, and celebrated by Sheridan in his verses on "The Ridotto," which inaugurated them. There were factions at that time for both rooms (everything at Bath was partisan), and Sheridan in "The Rivals" mentions the High and the Low Roomians.

[2] Cf. for the first a pathetic instance of "poor Nancy," ruined and maddened through scandal magnifying indiscretion, which Sheridan introduced into his "Ode to Scandal" (published 1819), and treated in a way that recalls the fate of Ophelia, and perhaps that of "Captain Racket's" Miss Prim: Cf. App. to this volume A (1), and *ante*, p. 124, *n.* 2.

"And then a thousand childish things
The pretty mad one rudely sings,
Or mute on the pathway she gazes
And weeps as she scatters her daisies,
Or else in a strain more distractedly loud,
She chants the sad thought of her fancy,
And shivers, and sings of the cold shroud—
Alas! alas! poor Nancy."

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duels sometimes opened another vault, and there was "snug lying in the Abbey." Nor can its belfry forget the days when drab Methodists rebuked their ridiculers, and servants preached to their masters; or when both worlds met in Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, who played the great lady to pietists; or that symbolic moment when John Wesley confronted Beau Nash.[1]

Nash died in the year when Sheridan was sent to Harrow and eight years before his father lodged at Bath. During those years its tone had been gradually altering. The change is audible in the late "Inkle Letters" of Christopher Anstey and in the last novel of Smollett, who began by failing at Bath as a doctor and brought out "Humphry Clinker" in the year of his death.[2] Nash, Bath's representative from Queen Anne to the beginning of the third George, had lent its follies routine and its society distinction. Profiting by his gambling disasters, he had regularised the place and striven to atone for dissipation by etiquette. Derrick, elected by a faction and, though Irish, hostile to Sheridan's father, now reigned in his stead. He was shortly to be succeeded by the punctilious Wade, but already a reaction had set in. Ease was slowly deteriorating

And for the second, the death of Lord Strange in 1771, mentioned by Sheridan's brother in a hitherto unpublished letter of June 6, to his uncle, Richard Chamberlaine, Sheridan MSS. As to the booking, the following verse was made on the custom:

"The Church and rooms the other day
Opened their books for prayers and play
The priests got twelve, Hoyle sixty-seven,
How great the odds for Hell 'gainst Heaven."

Gentleman's Mag. for 1760, cited by M. Barbeau in his "Ville d'Eaux Anglaise," p. 59. As to the Pump-room, the old one was opened in 1706. Baldwin, the architect, enlarged and renovated it in 1751, and it was pulled down and replaced in 1791.

[1] Cf. Wesley's "Journal," June 5, 1739. Wesley said, "You, Mr. Nash, take care of your body, we take care of our souls." Graves, the poet-friend both of Bolingbroke's half-sister, Lady Luxborough, and of the Linleys, insisted that some of the Methodists banned all recreation as sinful—an inhuman doctrine which can never be divine. For the whole episode, cf. Barbeau, pp. 155, 156.

[2] 1771. He had already handled Bath in "Peregrine Pickle" (heiress-hunters) and "Roderick Random" (sharpers).

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into vulgar free-and-easiness. "A very considerable portion of genteel people," wrote Smollett, "is lost in a mob of impudent plebeians." "'Twas mob or Ridotto—'twas both, or 'twas neither," wrote Sheridan in 1771.

> "What Dukes and what Drapers, what Barbers and Peers,
> What Marquises, Earls and what Knights of the shears,
> What Cook and what Countess, what Nymphs of the brooms,
> What Mob-sceptred Queens came that night to the rooms!
> What Dashers of ink, Pettifoggers, Musicians,
> With *a new and correct list* of all the Physicians,"

wrote the elderly Anstey of the election ball in 1775, in a strain severer even than that of his "New Bath Guide."[1] The exception had now become the rule, and in their rhymed description of the ball supper both authors agree in contrasting the Frenchified fare with the rough behaviour of its consumers. Bath, it is true, had all along assembled a motley crowd of such as, in Horace Walpole's words, went there to get well but were soon cured of that complaint. All along, too, fashion had sprawled in *negligé* by "the Waters of Scandal." To re-quote Smollett, folks there "descended from their pedestals," and what with informal afternoon calls and perpetual meeting-places, the least similar jostled each other amicably. But hitherto the amenity had been preserved, and the old had relished their distractions as much as the young. People did not tread on their neighbour's toes or kick his shins; they talked less of *savoir vivre* and *bon ton*,[2] but they were more polite.

Now, however, Bath began to be a bear-garden. Two successive wars had fattened commissaries, contractors, jobbers and parvenus of every description; East Indian nabobs had eclipsed the West Indian planters.[3] The tongue of rumour

[1] Cf. "New Bath Guide" (1766), p. 35.

> "If a broker or statesman, a gamester or peer,
> A naturalised Jew or a bishop comes here,
> Or an eminent trader in cheese should retire," etc.

[2] Cf. Anstey's "Election Ball," p. 32.

[3] Charles Sheridan, in the letter just cited of June 6, 1772 (during the two months' interval between his brother's two duels), says: "I wish you were a

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wagged in a babel of voices which spared no one and nothing—not even the King's English. In Smollett's pages we find Scotch peers elbowing St. Kitts mulattoes, a colonel dancing with a Southwark ironmonger's daughter, a Wapping landlady staring quality out of countenance, a paralytic attorney nearly tripping up the Lord Chancellor, and the master of the ceremonies mistaking a countess's waiting-maid for a great lady. Nor will it be forgotten that nearly seventy years later Mr. Pickwick was told that the presence of tradesmen was quite inconsistent with paradise. That however was when Bath had sunk into the shabby-genteel, though before it had subsided into the "desert" sneered at by Dickens's "Volumnia Deadlock." All was hubbub and impudence. Syndicates of sharpers kept a keen look-out for rustic greenhorns and would-be beaux. Levanting heiress-hunters were common as the chairs and chaises that aided them. As for duels, their name was legion, and of these it need only be noted that Smollett's description of one between Lord Quiverwit and Roderick Random so closely resembles Sheridan's encounter with Mathews, that had Sheridan's duel been fiction, he would certainly have been charged with plagiarising it from Smollett.

But though decadence had already set in, Smollett's pessimism doubtless aggravated it. Different *cliques* appealed to different authors: the polite world to Sheridan, the staider *élite* of literature to Miss Burney, and, not forty years later, the modest romance of sweet seventeen to Jane Austen, whose Anne mused of "high-wrought love and eternal constancy" and "spread purification and perfume all the way." Smollett focussed Bath's rough-and-tumble. Yet in 1771 Bath was not wholly deluged by plutocrats and paupers, it was still a suburb of London, the middle *milieu* flourished, town idyll and town satire were not extinct. Country squires and London gentlemen could smile through their gout at the follies around them, while their daughters danced minuets or frisked it at

nabob, and it would be your own fault if I had not the happiness of seeing you and my aunt in Bath in a week, she dancing in a cotill(i)on and you sitting at a table looking on at her. . . ." Sheridan MSS.

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water parties on the Avon. In the old "Spring gardens, Vauxhall," Mrs. Purdie (lodging-house keeper, and perfumer)[1] twice a week purveyed her teas and breakfasts, while Tomkins plied his ferry-boat from the "stairs at the bottom of the South Parade." Lovers could still meet by the willow-shaded grotto in the gardens northward across the fields, the trysting place of Elizabeth Linley and Sheridan, who immortalised it in verse.[2] Music, under Linley's direction with astronomer Herschel as *chef d'orchestre*,[3] the theatre, under the successive management of the two Palmers, art led by Gainsborough—these still offered rival attractions to the intrigues of the parades and the slanders of the Pump-room. Scandal, venomous and

[1] "No, no, my dear Dinah, I'll prove to the State
Youth and beauty are sold at so easy a rate;
I can buy you for sixpence as much as you please
At Jolly's, at Dawson's, or Mrs. Purdie's."
Anstey, "Inkle Letters," p. 42. It was at one of these water-picnics that Miss Linley's sham duel occurred. Cf. Dufferin Papers. A remnant of the South Parade stairs is still visible.

[2] It has often been misplaced elsewhere. Its true site was the end of the garden of No. 65, Pulteney Street, where ten years ago an old weather-beaten willow still grew. Cf. Mr. Meehan's article in the *Beacon* for September, 1898. In an album kept by Mrs. Sheridan at Harrow (in 1782), which has recently been offered for sale, is a version of Sheridan's "Grotto" verses, entitled "'Anxiety,' written in J—n's grotto." (? "Johnson's" or "Jackson's" grotto.) I suspect the album to be one bequeathed by Mrs. Sheridan to her friend Mrs. Stratford Canning, which Mr. Fraser Rae laid under contribution for some fugitive verses. The vendor seems to suppose that the "grotto" may after all have been at Harrow, but he may rest assured that this cannot be the case, since not only is the grotto mentioned in verses alluding to the episode of the poem—verses which were written both by Sheridan and his wife in 1775 (cf. chapters 6 and 9), but the Sheridan MSS. comprise another album kept by Sheridan's brother Charles, where this poem is styled "Verses addressed to *Miss Linley*." Sheridan's sister Elizabeth, who after her marriage with Henry LeFanu was at Bath in the winter months of 1789—1790, notices how the fashion had shifted with new walks and gardens to the north end of the town. LeFanu MSS.

[3] In the *Bath Chronicle* for January 23, 1772, is an advertisement by him respecting "certain treatment received at the hands of Linley." He there spells his name "Herschell." At this time he was also organist of the Octagon Chapel. Rauzzini, whom Gainsborough painted, used to sing with the Misses Linley.

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various, inspired the first rough draft of that "Pump-room Scene" which Sheridan read aloud to his admiring sisters, while the screen which garnished the lower rooms may have suggested the incident which he worked into the full-blown play. Anstey has celebrated this screen:

> "See with joy my Romeo comes,
> He conducts me to the Rooms,
> There he whispers not unseen
> Tender tales behind the screen."[1]

The great baths which had replaced the dripping dungeons of the earlier century were an aquarium of gossip and flirtation. Both sexes (for the bathers mixed) frolicked in the water and killed hearts and reputations at once, while, as was said long before of the ancient "Cross Bath," "all that the unwholesome shed, the wholesome skimmed." The old cries of the laver and oyster sellers continued to vex the mock-statesmen in their coffee-houses.[2] The courtyards of the Bear, the White Hart, and the Three Tuns still clattered with arrivals and departures. Scrace's livery stables still assisted elopements, and Gill the confectioner still sheltered constant and inconstant couples, Kuhf and Fitzwater had not ceased to supply the Assembly Rooms with Perigord pies in which the censorious discovered rooks, and pheasants which they declared were only chickens in disguise.[3] The knot of critics prided themselves on being as choice a tribunal as the London court of literary appeal.[4] Violins, girandoles, wreathed mirrors and wax tapers still formed the garniture of dances where the musicians surveyed theirkinsfolk in the throng,[5] and of tables where tired veterans piled their gold on the baize. The fashions

[1] "New Bath Guide," p. 63.

[2] "New Bath Guide."

[3] "Inkle Letters," *passim*.

[4] "For, let me tell you, I look upon our theatrical tribunal, though not in *quantity*, in quality as good as yours." Mrs. Tickell to Mrs. Sheridan, "BATH, March 9, 1775" (on the performance there of Sheridan's "Rivals"), transcribed by Moore, Vol. I., p. 139.

[5] "The Ridotto," title-page.

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THE NORTH PARADE, BATH
(showing the turning into PIERPOINT STREET)
[Old Quin is in the foreground to the left, and opposite to him
walks the "wicked" Lord Lyttelton],
from a rare coloured engraving
(in the Author's Possession).

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were yet those enormous head-dresses and *décolleté* corsages which Anstey satirised in his later verses, and the millinery which he punned on in his earlier:

> "Painted *lawns* and chequered *shades*,
> Crape that's worn by love-lorn maids,
> Watered tabbies, flowered brocades,
> Fine vermilion for the cheek,
> Velvet patches *à la Grecque*." [1]

The new city that was to expand into a monster had not yet devoured the old. Both remained comparatively small, compact and individual, nor as yet was it utterly heterogeneous or prosaic. All this was pasture for a comedian.

As the Abbey bells rang out to welcome a newcomer in 1771, he could look forward to a vista of surprises, especially if single, for Bath was the bachelor's Elysium. Meanwhile, if bashful, he could beguile his probation by subscribing a crown to one of the libraries—those "evergreen trees of diabolical knowledge"—Frederick's, which Sheridan names in "The Rivals," or Harding's or Leak's, where he is said to have written that comedy, and which earlier was frequented by Richardson; or Meyler's, which lingered long after Leak had been replaced by Bull and Upjohn; or Pratt's, which Mrs. Tickell mentions in her letters. He could look in at Mrs. Deard's, the "toyship," celebrated by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in her "Farewell" to the city, and he could glean the news at Crutwell's, the *Chronicle* office, when London tidings were thought incredibly swift in fourteen hours. The whole *bric-à-brac* of the sunny streets lay before him. He could survey the print-shops where the best mezzotints were to be bought for ten shillings. He could book his place for Ꝛalas, drink his first glass, try his first dip, be initiated in the rites of scandal. He could saunter through those gardens where the sparks trifled, and view the soft distance of hill and dale which suggested many a landscape to Gainsborough. If artistic, he might gain admittance to the painter's sanctuary in the Circus,[2] and watch

[1] "New Bath Guide," p. 26.
[2] No. 24.

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him playing his viol-di-gamba on that little first floor landing where but two years since he had taken old Chesterfield's portrait. Were he musical or witty, or lucky enough, their devotee might introduce him to the Linleys in the neighbouring Crescent, where he would meet the tuneful physician, Dr. Harrington, who lived to write a Latin epitaph on the songstress whose childhood he had tended; or their lodger, Dr. Priestley, the revolutionary *savant*, who originated Bentham's catchword of "The greatest good of the greatest number." Ere long, if he were poetaster, he would repair to "Sappho" Miller's at Batheaston, where, in a stiff garden so landscaped as to frame a glimpse of the London Road, the plump queen of the mincing Muses, fresh from the grand tour, held her "fair of Parnassus" and crowned the conqueror with myrtle.[1] If at all distinguished or distressed he would soon

[1] After a damsel chosen by lot had drawn the winning verses from a laurelled Italian urn. For the prospect on the London Road, etc., cf. the verses below cited. This was the real routine of these æsthetic assemblies, which Sheridan and Tickell had frequented, and at which they both smiled in more than one passage afterwards. In an early letter to his father-in-law Sheridan speaks of making verses worthy a cup of tea from the Batheaston urn. Mrs. Miller, as she then was (her husband being titled some years later), had married "Squire" John Miller, the friend to whom Christopher Anstey dedicated a paraphrase of Horace. She was fair, fat and forty, rather vulgar, somewhat affected, but truly kind. The proceeds of the published odes were devoted to the Bath charities. She aped Lady Guildford's verse-competition at Putney before the statue of Flora, where Fuseli, the artist, figured. Cf. Rogers' "Table-Talk," p. 198. Among the Sheridan MSS. is a "Bath Eastern Poem, by the Rev. George Lambart, on Novelty," beginning with "All hail transcendent novelty," and containing such gems as

"When Wesley from the pulpit bawls,
Or canting Madan whining calls
Our Faith to give good works the Lie."

Sheridan refers to Lady Miller in his verses to Mrs. (afterwards Lady) Crewe which accompanied "The School for Scandal":

"In Miller's dialect she would not prove
Apollo's priestess, but Apollo's love."

And Tickell, in his "Wreath of Fashion": "Miller convenes her literary rout," etc. He mentions Carlisle, Hare, Storer, Fitzpatrick, Townshend and Boothby as her satellites. In the "Annual Register" for 1777, in a

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dine at Prior Park with Ralph Allen—Allen, comrade of Pope and Chatham, who remembered him in his will, host and patron of Richardson and Fielding, who drew him as "Allworthy" in his novel; of Fielding's sister Sarah, herself an authoress and, like the two novelists, a close ally of Sheridan's mother; of Anne, Richardson's daughter, who married Ditcher the Bath surgeon, and stood godmother to Sheridan's younger sister;[1]

capital satire on Bath, which I should guess to be Tickell's, occur the following Millerana:

> "See how they hurry to that hallowed shrine—
> That sacred seat of Sappho and the Nine,
> Where placed on quarries of the purest stone
> The red brick shines unrivalled and alone.
> Bless us! What toil, what cost has been bestowed
> To give that prospect of the London Road.
> Our admiration knows not where to fix,
> *Here* a cascade and *there* a coach and six.
> Within a mystic vase with laurel crowned,
> Hence, ye profane! 'Tis consecrated ground.
> Here Sappho's hands the last sad rites dispense
> To mangle poetry and murder sense."

Horace Walpole, of course, trounced these lion-hunting orgies in several of his letters. Cf. (*inter alia*) that to Lady Ossory of January 12, 1775 ("Mrs. Miller's bouquet of artificial flowers"). In another he calls her "as romantic as Mdlle. Scuderi and as sophisticated as Mrs. Vesey [the "blue," friend of Mrs. Thrale, Mrs. Montagu and Sophy Byron, the poet's grandmother]." Graves, poet-author of "The Spiritual Quixote"—friend of the Linleys and Lady Luxborough—describes the wreath in his "Triflers," while Rowlandson caricatured the scene. Cf. for the whole subject, M. Barbeau's brilliant monograph, "Une Ville D'Eaux Anglaise," pp. 226 *et seq.*, which this note and the text generally supplements with new particulars.

[1] Cf. "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan"; and for Richardson, cf. Graves' "Triflers," p. 68 (cited by Barbeau, p. 277): "About the year 1752 I met Mr. Richardson in Mr. Leak the bookseller's parlour, who told me he was going to dine with Mr. Allen. . . . 'Twenty years ago,' said he, 'I was the most obscure man in Great Britain, and now I am admitted to the first characters of the kingdom.'" Mrs. Cholmondeley, Peg Woffington's sister, had married Horace Walpole's clergyman nephew. It was at her house that he first heard read Sheridan's verses to Mrs. Crewe, which accompanied a manuscript copy of "The School for Scandal." "I trust they will not long retain their MS.-hood," was his comment (letter to Lady Ossory of October 8, 1777).

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of Quin the wit and Hoare the pastellist; of all in need, for he had himself been poor—Allen, reorganiser of the Post Office (as Palmer was of the Bath coach service), projector, benefactor, the tutelary saint of Bath. And were the stranger pensive, he might dream awhile of its roll of renown, from Shakespeare, two of whose sonnets bear on it,[1] to Congreve, who died there, blind and ill, in a carriage accident; Wycherley, who stayed there more than once; and its frequent visitors, Butler, Berkeley, Bolingbroke, Pope, Gay, Parnell and Arbuthnot; from these, again, through a long succession, up to poor dilapidated Sterne, and Smollett at the worn end of his tether; above all to Chatham, already classed with the immortals though still breathing. How little could he then foresee the fame of a later generation, of Goldsmith still the butt of "the great Cham" Johnson, himself so often a tarrier at Bath; of Mrs. Thrale, afterwards "the pale moon of the Crescent," and prodigy Frances Burney; of modish Chris. Anstey and mocking Horace Walpole; of Gibbon visiting his stepmother in Charles Street; of young Charles Fox, now actually denouncing Press liberty; of his future worshippers, the two bright Duchesses of Devon, as yet in their teens; of Wilberforce, safe in his nursery; of Windham (just of age), who in Bath was to spend his pedantic honeymoon; or of indignant Burke, there destined to pass his last embittered winter.[2] Far less could he suppose that the world would hear

[1] Sonnets CLIII. and CLIV.

[2] Just after Coleridge had completed his first course of Unitarian sermons at Bath. To later names should be added those of Byron's parents, who first met at Bath, and were probably married there; and of Shelley, who was there with Godwin in 1811. Gibbon's stepmother lived at 22, Charles Street, and in 1793 he stayed at York House, where Windham lodged also in 1797. George Prince of Wales stayed in 1796 at Pulteney Street. In 1804 he was the guest of Lord Thurlow. (Cf. "Creevey Papers," Vol. I., p. 30.) Herschel lived at 7, New King Street; Gainsborough had begun with lodgings at 14, Abbey Churchyard, and 8, Ainslie's, Belvidere, before he was installed at 24, The Circus. Fox often stayed at the South Parade, and once at Laura Place. Georgiana of Devonshire first frequented the Crescent, afterwards Laura Place, where in the 'nineties she was under treatment by Dr. Mounsey for her eyes, on which Sheridan addressed her in a playful set of verses. Burke, who had visited Bath in 1792, stayed there

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again of young Sheridan, racketing with Mathews, loitering in the boudoir of Bath's reigning belle, Lady Margaret Fordyce, haunting the Linleys' drawing-room, and hoping to fill empty pockets by the fugitive muse—Sheridan, rapt at this moment in wonder at how far the "linnet" transcends Miss Waller, as she sings "Mad Bess" from Purcell, which concludes the mixed performance.

But while Sheridan listens, his father discourses, and Miss Linley carols, we must pause awhile to retrace their origin, and, like Charles Surface's friend, to knock down their family pictures with the wooden hammer of pedigree.

Of the Sheridan lineage there are many and conflicting records, not only in books and magazines, but in differing family records. The Dufferin Papers furnish several discrepant genealogies, one of them a valuable copy from the Dublin Castle records of Ulster King-of-Arms.[1] The Sheridan documents afford some sidelights, and there are references in the British Museum manuscripts. Miss Alicia LeFanu has left notes among the Dufferin Papers which however contradict her statements in the "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan." Mr. Brooke,

last in February, 1797; he resided at No. 11, North Parade. Coleridge preached there in 1796. Cf. (among other books on Bath) Meehan's "Famous Houses"; and cf. Sheridan MSS. The Sheridans, in their visit of 1764, seem to have resided in The Terrace. It was then that Mrs. Sheridan visited Sarah Fielding, who lived at Yew Cottage in Church Lane, Widcombe, and made acquaintance with the Linleys. The Tickells lived at Beaulieu House, Newbridge Hill. Nelson, in 1793, stayed at 2, Pierpoint Street. It may be added that in 1809 Lady Nelson was at 2, Bennet Street at the same time as Lady Hamilton was at 6, Edward Street! Lady H. revisited Bath in 1812, when she stayed at 12, Pulteney Street.

[1] This differs from the pedigree (founded, as will appear, on a misassumption) given by the late Lord Dufferin in the "Sketch" of his mother's life, and it differs widely from the records of Ulster King-of-Arms, on which Mr. Fitzgerald bases his genealogy in his "Lives of the Sheridans." Among the Dufferin Papers is another also, compiled by Mr. George Whitehouse, a collateral of the Sheridans, and showing further additions and variations.

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himself a connection of the family, tried to thread the maze in the *Dublin University Magazine* of 1852 on a theory which, though adopted by Lord Dufferin, will scarcely hold water. The Camden Society's "Life of Bishop Bedell" contains a chapter on the early seventeenth century Sheridans. Ruvigny's "Jacobite Peerage and Grants of Honour" gives fresh particulars, and there are interesting details in the statement which Thomas Sheridan drew up for his own defence in 1681. There is abundant material for a French branch of the house, and allusions in correspondence show that more than one Sheridan fought against the American insurgents [1]—a fact interesting as regards the lineage of the great American General. There are Sheridans too of Sligo and of Longford (the home of the Goldsmiths), as well as of Cavan,[2] and a rare "Hancock" print of 1790 displays the features of a Sheridan who may have been a designer for the china manufactory at Worcester. Much there is to reconcile and explain. When once, however, we reach the eighteenth century, we tread on firmer ground, and quite a small library touches the association of Swift and Stella with the eccentric Dr. Thomas Sheridan and his fantastic homestead of Quilca. Some detail may be pardoned in the case of a line so long and gifted—one that, with the exception perhaps of the Napiers, has contributed more of romantic distinction than any other, and can claim, it has been said, no less than one hundred

[1] Cf., *e.g.*, letters of Captain Henry Sheridan to General Vaughan (1779–81), Eg. MS. 3135, f. 23, 3136, f. 173. Another officer of that name is mentioned as serving in Jamaica about 1820; cf. Malet's records of the Eighteenth Hussars. The *Globe* for 1829 notices a certain Garrick (or Garrett) Brinsley Sheridan who eloped with the daughter of a Lady Perrot at Cheltenham. He was apparently a solicitor, but had two brothers, one a colonel in the Army, the other a post-captain in the Navy. He alleged that he was born on shipboard, and that he was "a near relation of Richard Brinsley Sheridan," cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 216 d.

[2] A certain William Sheridan of Toledo, Ohio, communicated to the late Lord Dufferin in March, 1897, an interesting account of this branch. They settled about 1654 on lands presented for services in Cromwell's army, and brought with them (so asserts the narrator) their family banshee from their native Cavan.

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and twenty-six notable names.[1] Moreover, no exact pedigree of the whole family has hitherto been forthcoming.

Between the towns of Cavan and Killeshandra, and behind the episcopal palace of Kilmore where Bishop Bedell reposes, lies a shimmering network of lake, rock, and islet which has been called a tiny archipelago. Here stands Trinity Island, and on it the ruin of an old abbey, where, if tradition holds good, the first Sheridan landed from Spain in the six hundreds, and by the Pope's order founded a school of learning. Over this island school, it is said, the O'Sheridans presided for centuries. One of them penned an Irish manuscript now in the University of Rheims, where a Sheridan was to practise physic in later times, and Archbishop Ussher removed other such volumes to the library of Trinity College, Dublin. Far northward rose Cloughoughter (or Loughoughter) Castle, resembling one of the stately towers at Carnarvon and long graceful in ivy-clad ruin.[2] There, towards the close of the sixteenth century, flourished Donald O'Sheridan, the last chief of a tribe that was not so much a clan as a sub-sept of the O'Reillys, intermingled with and rising not only through them, but also through the O'Connors and the O'Bradys—those Milesian princelets over whom Thackeray used to make so merry. Donald's wife was an "O'Nial," a scion of that house which gave birth to the noble John who was assassinated in the fierce broils of 1651. The O'Sheridan demesnes extended, like their feuds, to more than one county and eventually escheated to the Crown in the reign of James I.[3] By

[1] Lady Holland, in her Diary, which Lord Ilchester has now ably edited, affects to excuse some of Sheridan's later escapades by alleging the embarrassment of his finances and the "meanness" of his origin. But the Sheridans were a far more illustrious family than hers. Her ideas, too, of coarseness and vulgarity are evidenced in her journal by her application of these terms to Emma, Lady Hamilton, for telling Sir William, in her Cheshire accent, before she posed as a water nymph, with a classic urn, not to be "afeared" that she would break his "joog" [jug].

[2] A print of it may be found in Bishop Mant's "History of the Church."

[3] One of the pedigrees affirms that this happened later under Cromwell in 1650, while the letter of the American Sheridan, cited in a previous note,

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this "O'Nial" alliance Donald had a son Denis, the founder of the main line, another, "Consonaght or Cornelius," a "friar residing abroad," and in all probability, as we shall find, a third, Thomas, whose son Patrick seems to have been Sheridan's great-grandfather. He had, thirdly, a daughter Sarah, who, marrying a Sarsfield, became the mother of James II.'s General

loosely gives Elizabeth as the confiscator. Others, again, have confused later forfeitures under William III. with the Jacobean one. But Thomas Sheridan, in his Speech of Defence on December 15, 1680, ["A Short Account or State of Mr. Sheridan's Case before the Late House of Commons in a letter to J. T. London. Printed for J. Hindmarsh at the Bull in Cornhill 1681,"] says of the family estates, "In one county [Cavan] there is a Castle and a large demesne, and in another [Longford ?] a greater tract of land for several miles together yet known by our name. I need not say who was the head or chief, 'tis too much that my grandfather [*i.e.*, Donald] was the last that enjoyed the estate, and that my father [*i.e.*, Denis], left an orphan at the beginning of King James' reign, soon found himself dispossessed and exposed to the world, that whole country with five others in Ulster being eventually escheated to the Crown." He also says of himself that he was "born a Gentleman, of one of the Antientest Families, and related to many Considerable in Ireland" (cf. p. 11). As to the Trinity Island tradition, which comes from Mr. Lowry's account in the Dufferin Papers, Ulster King-of-Arms records, on the other hand, that the first Sheridan was the second son of "O'Connor Sligoe," who "took the surname of Sheridan in the tenth Century." A few instances may at once be given, however, as to the conflict of the official and traditional accounts both with accounts of the same class and with each other. The Dufferin record by Ulster King-of-Arms clashes with his record as given by Mr. Fitzgerald as to the birth and marriage of Denis Sheridan (cf. Pedigree), while the latter differs in several instances from known facts about the later Sheridans. Miss LeFanu's account in the Dufferin Papers differs from the former in making Dr. Thomas Sheridan, Swift's friend, the son of a Patrick Sheridan. And in this she also differs from herself in her Memoirs of her grandmother, which asserts that he was son to Thomas Sheridan the first; from Watkins' account, which makes him the son of another Thomas, a small landholder in Cavan; from Mr. Brooke's statement in the *Dublin Mag.*, which makes him the son of James Sheridan [third son of Denis and grandfather of the French Sheridans], and from the information of a Miss Josephine Ingham, which would suggest that he was Sir Thomas' son. The Dublin Castle account again makes this James the second son of Denis, and actually omits the two famous bishops from the names of Denis' sons, supplementing his offspring by "Anthony, John and Owen," of whom nothing is heard elsewhere.

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Sarsfield, titular Earl of Lucan. Sheridan gloried in his descent, and when he was playing the bard at Sir Watkin Wynne's in 1786, his wife told her sister that he had as good a right to be one as Ap-Reece, "though he is an 'O' instead of an 'Ap.'" On one occasion when Sheridan quoted Ovid in disclaimer of ancestral pride, but added that he was proud of being an O'Sheridan, though he had thought fit to drop the "O," his son Tom replied with ready wit, "and who has a greater right to the 'O' than we have, for we *owe* everybody."[1]

With Denis Sheridan opens the English record of a family which henceforward ceases to be local. These mid-seventeenth century Sheridans were all Cavaliers or Jacobites, enthusiasts and scholars, while two at least of them were at once authors and men of action.

Born a Catholic when the century opened, and at first only the parish priest of small Kildrumferton, Denis early fell in with Bedell, Protestant Bishop of Kilmore, under whose ægis he quitted the Roman fold and became rector of Drongland and Lara. He remained a staunch adherent and assistant of his protector. He aided him in his famed translation of the Scriptures into Erse, while for his sake and loyalty's he twice narrowly escaped death before the rebellion of 1641 forced him to fly and cost the bishop his life. Denis, moreover, was the first to wed an English heiress, Miss Foster[2]—an example followed by one of his sons, two of his grandsons, and three of his remote descendants. Those sons, faithful to the Stuarts, reached eminence amid times as troublous and careers as venturesome as their father's. The eldest, William, Bedell's godson, and, like him, eventually Bishop of Kilmore and Ardagh, saw the light at Togher in 1635, and his visage, wooden and

[1] Cf. Angelo's "Picnic" (1905), p. 143.

[2] Cf. "Thomas Sheridan's Case" above cited:—"My parents were Protestants, my mother a gentlewoman of good fortune, a Foster who for my father's sake quitted her country and her relations, both famed for their loyalty and sufferings in the late rebellion when my father escaped twice narrowly with his life at last." Several early records misdescribe her as "Square [or Squire] Atkinson's daughter."

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obstinate, still looks down on posterity, a non-juring and "damned disinheriting countenance." He became chaplain to Eustace, Chancellor of Ireland, which was then a battle-ground of Royalists and Roundheads, clanking with cuirassiers or resounding with psalms; and to the Duke of Ormonde also, whom in 1689 he beset with a memorial.[1] The Restoration brought quieter times, and in 1677 he was made Dean of Down, while in 1682 he was elevated to the see of which, nine years later, Dutch William deprived him. That he still owned influence is proved by his late patronage of Sheridan's young grandfather, and though a general of the Church militant, he continued to wield the pen,[2] till, in 1711, (when his hopes must have risen at Harley's triumph) he closed his vicissitudes at Fulham, where he lies buried.

Denis' second son Patrick (a namesake of the cousin to whom we shall trace Richard Brinsley's origin) was born near Enniskillen in 1638, attained high honours at Trinity College, was its senior fellow in 1665, and, if the strange chronicle may be trusted, actually rests under its library. Though somewhat older than the distinguished brother who next claims attention, he owed something to his Court influence,[3] and in 1676 became Bishop of Cloyne. Favoured throughout by the volatile Charles, he was lucky enough to die three years earlier than his royal master.

A less fortunate star attended the fourth son, Thomas, the most adventurous of them all in a cause which is itself a romance of adventure. Born at Trim in 1646, like his brother a fellow of Trinity, and, further, a fellow of the new Royal Society in 1679, entered at the Middle Temple in 1670, he started in the next year as collector of the Cork Customs and enriched both himself and the county by his management. But he first emerges as *protegé* of the Duke of York, whose natural

[1] Cf. Add. MS. 28876, f. 162.

[2] He not only published "Discourses," a late London edition of which was published in 1704, but also, according to the Dufferin Papers, "St. Paul's Confession of Faith," printed at Dublin in 1685.

[3] Cf. "Thomas Sheridan's Case" (1681), p. 13.

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child—"Square Jones' daughter"—he is said to have espoused and whom he followed when he retired under the King's displeasure in 1680 to Brussels. No sooner had Thomas Sheridan returned home than he found himself charged as privy to a Jesuit plot (together with his nephew, Wilson, an Englishman) and branded by enemies as "a second Coleman." On Wednesday, December 15, 1681, he was brought up for examination before Mr. Speaker Williams and cleared himself in a trenchant speech from the suspicion of being "a Protestant in masquerade." Further detained, however, for three weeks in "expensive confinement" on account of a questionable paper written by Wilson, he boldly demanded a writ of *habeas corpus*, which was duly served upon the serjeant-at-arms. This provoked one of those collisions between the Courts of Law and Houses of Parliament which were frequent before the white horse finally supplanted the white rose, nor was he released till a sudden prorogation settled the moot question without a hearing. In 1682—and this with much else has been overlooked—when the crooked Shaftesbury's treason had just been exposed to the national resentment, he proved his loyalty by presenting an address from the Bristol 'prentices to the Sovereign at Whitehall. Nor was this all. He called a meeting of the young tradesmen, headed a procession to church with scarlet streamers to shame the blue and green of sedition, and presided over a crowning banquet in the Guildhall of the city.[1]

It had been his favour with the King's brother that entailed the royal suspicions. When the Duke of York ascended the throne Thomas Sheridan's fidelity was rewarded in quick succession with a chief secretaryship, a commissionership of the Revenue, and the secretaryship for Ireland. His bed there was not one of roses, and in 1687 he delivered to King James "an elaborate and high-minded appeal" against "an extreme wrong" done him by the Lord Deputy Tyrconnel.[2] But he

[1] Cf. *The London Gazette*, "Thursday, Sept. 14, Monday, Sept. 18, 1682, and Thursday, Nov. 2, to Monday, Nov. 6, 1682."

[2] Cf. a letter to the late Lord Dufferin in the Dufferin Papers. It was found in the Bodleian by Mr. Saxe Bannister some thirty-five years since

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advocated an Irish policy of toleration and enlightenment that would have spared his King and country much misfortune had it been heeded. These theories, together with advanced views on education (which perhaps descended to the great Sheridan's father), he embodied in his famous "Discourse on the Rise and Power of Parliaments," a work published in 1677, reprinted in 1870, as "Revelations of Irish History," and addressed to a subject bound up with the destinies of his descendant. Through the Stuarts he had risen, for them he was to fall; yet it was under William the Third that his daughter Patty, who married Colonel Guilliame, one of his aides-de-camp, was to recover part, it was said, of the Sheridan estates. But the Cavalier never made peace with the new powers. Loyalist, author, adventurer and administrator, he closed his days according to the received version (in 1688) at St. Germain, whither he had fled with his master, who appointed him his private secretary. There is, however, some reason to believe that he lived some years longer and perhaps ended his agitated course at the battle of the Boyne, fighting for the King to whose care he bequeathed his son and namesake, a lad of fourteen.[1]

The very name of this Thomas Sheridan the younger has eluded the chroniclers of Sheridan's ancestry, yet it is linked with romance, and his Jacobite knighthood has been often transferred to his father. The young orphan became page at the Court of exile where, according to the chronicle and unlike most pages, he employed his leisure "in the study of mathematics and moral philosophy." His name appears as a witness

and communicated to the late Lord Dufferin. Mr. Saxe Bannister is the able editor of Sheridan's treatise, which contains a brief record of the Sheridans.

[1] Cf. in the Sheridan MSS. a manuscript extract from an Italian "Life" of the Young Pretender translated by his secretary Michell. This extract gives the career of the young Thomas Sheridan, and it is there alleged that his father died at the Boyne. Some of the above details are taken from Ruvigny's "Jacobite Peerage and Grants of Honour," pp. 165-6. From a document there mentioned it would appear that he had two daughters, Helen and Mary. This document, which is dated 1712, mentions one, "Kennedy" as "procurator for Thomas Sheridan, deceased," and from this it is argued that he did not die till that late period. The tradition about Patty has been questioned.

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to a deed of gift by the Young Pretender and Prince Henry of Ohlau to the "Apostolic See," and in the Jacobite rising of 1715 he was sent on a mission from the Duke of Ormonde to Lord Mar. In March, 1726, the Old Pretender created him a knight and a baronet.[1] After years of devotion to his hereditary cause, he was, in 1739, made "preceptor" or governor to the young Charles Edward, "eldest son," so runs the quaint record, "of the renowned Juba." Inseparable from his royal pupil, he insisted on going out in 1745, though he was then nearly seventy. He followed the Chevalier's misfortunes with the rank of colonel as far as the battle which sealed his fate. Broken by exertion, he took refuge at Arisaig on a French man-of-war, and escaped in disguise to Paris, whence he proceeded to Rome barely in time to "pay his duty" to the worsted leader. There he expired, the last of the Sheridans to uphold a banner for which no gallantry could ever struggle again.

The baronetcy became extinct. But in the old churchyard at Annagh, in County Cavan, is the following epitaph from the pen of J. E. O'Reilly, a cultivated physician of that parish, who had taken one Michael Sheridan, an old day-labourer, to his home:

"To the Memory of Michael Sheridan.

Beneath this stone old Michael lies;
To Sheridan he brought no stain,
Faithful as he who in disguise
With Charles left Culloden's plain.

Though poor was he, his mind was cast
On his who made old Drury ring,
His life in humbler toils was past,
His grandsire fought for Stuart's King.

Ob. A.D. 1830. Æt. 90.

Requiescat in Pace."[2]

Cf. Ruvigny's "Jacobite Peerage and Grants of Honour," pp. 165–6, and for the deed of gift, cf. "Hist. MSS. Comm. Abergavenny MS.," p. 218.

[2] Dufferin Papers. From a correspondence with the late Lord Dufferin it appears that this Dr. O'Reilly (probably a cognate of the Sheridans) was a collector of pictures, many of which were "sold for a song."

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This humble nonagenarian cannot therefore have descended from the Pretender's tutor, and he was probably the grandson of a Chevalier Michael Sheridan, shortly to be noticed, who lived in France and also fought for the Stuarts.

Denis Sheridan's third son, James, was neither bishop, statesman, nor fugitive, but throve in some business after being educated at the college where his three brothers had first distinguished themselves. Like his brother William, he married an O'Reilly, and he is said to have built that Quilca Mansion[1] which passed to Sheridan's grandfather, which Swift and Stella were to celebrate, and which Sheridan's father adorned. Like the rest he was a Jacobite, but he was never Anglicised, nor did he suffer in the cause, and he is only notable as the forbear of the French Sheridans. He had five sons. John, the eldest, wedded an English squire's daughter, and seems to have been a Catholic and Jacobite;[2] the fourth, William, is probably the subject of Dr. Thomas Sheridan's humorous complaint in a letter of 1735 to Swift.[3] Daniel, the second, married a Chamberlaine of the same Anglo-Irish stock as her namesake who became Sheridan's mother. He made a fortune in commerce and through his children founded the French branch of Sheridans which still flourishes in the Marquises of Maillé. His eldest son, James, from whom Lord Dufferin mistakenly derived his mother's line, traded at Porte-au-Prince, where in

[1] Watkins, however, calls it "Dr. Sheridan's paternal mansion." Cf. "Memoirs of Sheridans," Vol. I., p. 18. His authority, however, is of small account, and a tradition otherwise pervades the Dufferin Papers.

[2] Letters from him of 1720 to a "Cardinal Gualterio" are in the British Museum, Add. MS. 20, 130, ff. 277, 290.

[3] "Swift's Works," Vol. 18, p. 378. William is there called cousin to "Counsellor Sheridan," and this "Counsellor" was probably the son of William, Bishop of Kilmore, of whose marriage we know. He was with Dr. Thomas Sheridan (of whom presently) when he died, cf. T. Sheridan senior's "Life of Swift," p. 393. William Sheridan may have been the kinsman of that name to whom Richard Brinsley's parents entrusted him and his sister in 1757, while they were in England. Cf. "Memoirs of Mrs. F. Sheridan," p. 83. A William Sheridan (possibly his son) is mentioned as being at the Hotwells while Sheridan was there in 1792, tending his dying wife.

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1747 he was naturalised as "Jacques Sheridan." Louis XV. trafficked in titles as much as our Georges, and it is not surprising, therefore, to find Jacques ennobled in retirement as "the most high and mighty seigneur, Marquis d'Etian" of Château d'Avoir on the river Loire. Nor is it the least curious of the many coincidences between the earlier and later scions of the family, that at Blois on the banks of the same river, Sheridan's father took refuge in 1764. His alliance with Jeanne Schutte, a St. Domingo heiress on whom he settled what was then a substantial sum, resulted in another Jeanne, who became wife of no less a personage than Louis Marie Renée de Lande, Baron de Beaumanoir, Marquis de Brie. These in their turn were parents of the Marquis de Maillé de la Tour Landry and of the Marquise de Hautfort. Daniel Sheridan had three other children, the "Chevalier" Michael, "a Jacobite captain in FitzJames' regiment," whose presumed grandson has been already mentioned, John, a physician at Rheims, and a daughter Anne whose name was perpetuated in one of Sheridan's aunts.

The next in our gallery is the eccentric Reverend Thomas Sheridan, Doctor of Divinity, Swift's friend and the great Sheridan's grandfather. Before making his acquaintance it is necessary to discuss his precise place in the family tree, which has always been a puzzle and will never perhaps be determined. Lord Dufferin, following the unverified researches of Mr. Brooke, believed that Denis Sheridan's fourth son James (Daniel Sheridan's father) was also the father of Dr. Thomas Sheridan. But it is highly improbable that if Daniel Sheridan had really been the brother of Swift's ally, the fact should have escaped the explicit record of the French Sheridans. Miss Alicia LeFanu, daughter of Elizabeth, Sheridan's younger and by no means accurate sister,[1] has given two contradictory accounts. The one given in the "Memoirs" of her grandmother (based on her mother's information and evidently trusted by Mr. Brooke)

[1] Elizabeth LeFanu, as will appear, was quite mistaken as to her mother's pedigree.

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also affirms him to have been a grandson of the Bishop of Kilmore's younger brother (*i.e.*, James).[1] The other, which remains among the Dufferin Papers, derives him from an unknown Patrick Sheridan, "a gentleman who possessed a small estate in Cavan and a near relative of the Bishop of Kilmore." Watkins, again (indebted to Sam Whyte's loose gossip), supposed that he was a son of some unknown Thomas Sheridan, who is described in much the same terms as Miss LeFanu employs about "Patrick."[2] Assuming that he was the son of a "Thomas" Sheridan, it is hardly possible that his father could have been Sir Thomas, tutor to the young Chevalier, for Dr. Sheridan predeceased him, and there would surely have been some allusion to the romantic facts in Swift's correspondence. Still less could one of the same name have been another son of the elder Thomas, friend and secretary of the exiled King. Dates alone rebut a wild statement in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1827 to this effect, and a still wilder guess in an old obituary of Sheridan's father, which throws him back a whole generation.[3] There has evidently been great confusion between the three Thomases, Thomas Sheridan, son of Denis, his son Sir Thomas, preceptor to Prince Charlie, and the supposed Thomas, the shadowy squireen of Cavan. Under all the circumstances, Miss LeFanu's "Patrick" was probably Dr. Thomas Sheridan's father.

Patrick Sheridan's lineage is the real difficulty. It seems not unreasonable to suppose him sprung from some unascertained

[1] "Memoirs," p. 398. "The grandfather of Dr. Thomas Sheridan was younger brother of the Bishop of Kilmore."

[2] Cf. Watkins' "Memoir," Vol. I., p. 3. Whyte makes a similar statement in his "Miscellany" (1799), but though some authority for many details in the life of Sheridan's father, he is none on points of remote ancestry. Indeed, his son, Thomas Athenry Whyte, who edited this book, expressly corrects him on some of these heads in his "Addenda." The inscription on a tablet to the memory of Sheridan's father, erected in 1823 by "a passenger" in the north aisle near the west end of St. Peter's Church, Thanet, only mentions that his grandfather was the friend of Swift. A copy of this inscription is among the Dufferin Papers.

[3] So Mr. Saxe Bannister puts it in his edition of the other Thomas Sheridan's treatise.

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Thomas Sheridan, a contemporary, perhaps brother, of Denis, and squire of Oughteraghty, who would thus be grandfather instead of father to Dr. Thomas Sheridan. This assumption goes far to reconcile the various contradictions, as a glance at the pedigree will show. Patrick Sheridan would then be cousin to the two bishops, one of whom was his namesake, while his son, the Cavan schoolmaster, would be cousin to Sir Thomas Sheridan who died at Rome, and to the Daniel Sheridan whose son became a French marquis. We know that Dr. Thomas Sheridan must have been a contemporary of these, since he was born in 1678, and some further colour is lent to my theory by the fact that a seventeenth century Sheridan, apart from these Thomases, appears actually to have existed.[1] It is of course possible that Patrick Sheridan might have been a son of his namesake, the Bishop of Cloyne, though the bishop seems not to have married, and it was his brother who advanced Dr. Thomas. He might, too, as has been stated, have been a son of the Bishop of Kilmore. Or he might have been a more distant cognate of Denis Sheridan. But on the whole I venture to think that the descent indicated is the likeliest solution of the problem.

At first sight it would seem strange that the predecessors of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, a man rooted in Revolution ideas, should all have been unflinching Jacobites. But after the death-blow to the Stuart cause, the Jacobites shifted their discontents to the feuds of the Georgian heirs-apparent against their fathers. Even before 1745, Prince Frederick the Little had mustered a Jacobite Court to popularise him against George II., and forty years later, the Foxites used similar tactics against George III. A section of the Revolution families who wished the King to dance on their wires, rebelled when he defied them, and thus curiously enough

[1] In the British Museum is a "Memorandum" on the importation of Rhenish wines and a correspondence with one "J. Ellis," which hardly fit the authorship of the two Jacobites. Cf. Add. MSS. 28079, f. 9. For the Ellis correspondence in 1688 cf. *ibid.*, 28876, ff. 80, 123. Cf. a number of the *European Magazine* for 1788.

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the English Jacobins proved a last phase of the English Jacobites.[1]

With Dr. Thomas Sheridan, a Jacobite with clipped claws, the Cavalier strain vanishes, and that of the gipsy scholar begins. The dominie of Drumlane was a true Rabelaisian, though at the same time he was *par excellence* a great student and schoolmaster: "doubtless," wrote Swift, "the best instructor of youth in these kingdoms or perhaps in Europe, and as great a master of the Greek and Latin languages"; "the instiller" also "of all the principles of honour and justice," as the dean acknowledged even after their intimacy had cooled; and "a man of sense, modesty and virtue whose greatest fault is a wife and four children," as he owned in his letter of recommendation to Lord Carteret. Thomas Sheridan, moreover, was the first to follow Milton's advice and to institute Greek plays on a school stage,[2] and this Swift again has recorded. The first-fruits of their meeting in 1717—a chance meeting by mutual desire—

[1] How literally so, and even long before the Jacobins arose, appears from Fox's speech of November 25, 1779, where, in a philippic against George III., he said: "It was not a secret, nor should it be a moment absent from the King's recollection, that he owed his crown to the delinquency of the Stuart family. . . . Were one of them remaining, what scope for upbraiding and remonstrance could he not find in the present reign," etc. Cf. Adolphus, Vol. III., p. 77.

[2] "Hippolytus," with an English prologue, and "Philoctetes," which was acted by request of Lord Carteret, published in dramatic form, included in a theatrical dictionary which appeared during his grandson's lifetime, and emulated much later (through his grandson) by Dr. Parr. Cf. Parr's letter to Moore, Moore's "Life, etc., of Sheridan," Vol. I., p. 10. The friendship between Swift and Sheridan revived before the latter's death in 1738. Cf. an allusion by Swift in a letter to Barber: "Works," Vol. XIX., p. 242; another in *ibid.*, Vol. XVIII., p. 434; and his warning to one of Sheridan's pupils to profit by his lessons of moral instruction in his letter to William Graham, *ibid.*, Vol. XIX., p. 170. For the other references, cf. *ibid.*, Vol. IX., p. 9 (letter to Carteret), p. 509 (the well-known "Character of Sheridan"); *ibid.*, Vol. X., p. 572 (Swift's Latin verses to Sheridan); Thomas Sheridan junior's "Life of Swift" (1784), *passim*, which gives the best account of his father, and rebuts Lord Orrery's mistakes, pp. 370 *et seq.*; Watkins, *passim*, "A New Theatrical Dictionary" (1792), p. 375; Dufferin Papers and Swift's Corr., *passim*. Swift's best character of Sheridan is contained in his "History of the Second Solomon" (1729), "Works," Vol. IX., p. 513.

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WILLIAM SHERIDAN,
Bishop of Kilmore,
from an old engraving.

Dr. THOMAS SHERIDAN
(Swift's friend),
from an old engraving.

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was a Latin poem by the dean to his "learned friend," which terms him "deliciæ Musarum," "the delight of the Muses." The veteran owed much to the man who brushed up his scholarship, soothed his saturnine moods till he was designated the David of the clerical Saul, and rashly agreed to remind him of his parsimony,—a task which only provoked the taunt that he played Gil Blas to his Archbishop of Granada. A nomad like Gil Blas he remained, loving his ease and his inn and never owning a real home. Erratic, witty and the cause of wit in others, saturated with books yet wholly ignorant of men, a musician and sportsman, a linguist and practical jester, a punster and classical translator,[1] self-victimised and the dupe of his over-undertakings, light-hearted and light-pocketed, discreet for others, reckless and feckless for himself, he initiates the Sheridan tradition. He roamed from school to school, from living to living, the prey of his own caprices, and of "quondam friends"—"quon—damn them all," he said—who stole his pupils (some of whom he taught gratis), and battened on his hospitality. He ranged from bad bargains to worse, and he could scarcely have profited when he sold farms to the terrible old patriot and patron. What would the two shrewd bishops have said of a man who in middle age leased Rathfarnham, which in Swift's opinion was not worth a groat, spent money on it, and then forsook it only at last to die where it was impossible to live? Yet the ghost of Kilmore's prelate must have smiled in sour approval on that first of August anniversary of the Brunswick accession when, by Archdeacon

[1] "The Satyres of Persius in English" came from his pen as well as the "Philoctetes." His lighter works were "Ars Pun-ica sive Flos linguarum" (Dublin, 1719), "The Folly of Punns" (Dublin, 1719), "An Elegy on the Deplorable Death of Mr. Thomas Sheridan" (Dublin, 1722, misattributed to Swift), "Tom Pun-sibi Metamorphosed" (1724), "Tom Pun-sibi's Letter to Dean Swift" (1727), "An Ode to be performed at the Castle of Dublin . . . being the Birthday of Queen Caroline" (1728–9), "A New Gingle on Tom Dingle," and many other verses published in Swift's "Works," including some on Bishop Bedell. In 1744 his son published "Proposals" for printing further compositions of his father, viz., (1) a translation of Guarini's "Pastor Fido"; (2) poetical pieces on various subjects; (3) "A Choice Collection of Apothegms, *Bon mots* and Jests."

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Russell's invitation, Dr. Thomas Sheridan preached his sermon at Cork on "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," and in Swift's words was so good a marksman as to "kill his preferment by a single text." The archdeacon consoled him with the gift of a manor, but so poor a courtier proved the ex-royal-chaplain, that years afterwards he strove to dispel the imputation of Jacobitism by futile odes in honour of Queen Caroline's birthday.

At the outset he was earning twelve hundred a year, at the close he left more children than banknotes. Nothing could change his happy-go-lucklessness, or damp the spirits of one who was always out at elbows and never out of temper. His foes indeed were they of his own household. The termagant wife, Elizabeth Macfadden of Ulster, whom he called "Ponsy," but Swift, "Xantippe" and, we regret to add, "the greatest beast in Europe," quartered a whole tribe of her poor relations on him, including her mother; nor was it long before their rapacity had "twice spent" her dowry of five hundred a year. She stinted his scholars and wasted his substance. Remote kinsmen of his own completed the ruin, till he confessed to Swift that he was entirely "be-Sheridaned."[1] But throughout his life he laughed away care with a rebus and a madrigal, or drowned it in a social jorum.

Yet both Swift and Stella trusted their "second Solomon" beyond all others. To Sheridan alone he confided the proof-sheets of the only two compositions which he eventually signed, "The Drapier Letters" and "Gulliver's Travels," written under Sheridan's Quilca roof-tree. To Sheridan he opened his heart in 1726 when he thought Stella was dying in that poignant sentence, "I conclude the fairest soul in the world hath left its

[1] Cf. Swift's "Works," Vol. XVIII., p. 378. Thomas Sheridan, in his verses comparing woman to a cloud, also speaks of "Xanti's everlasting tongue." Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. XV., p. 126. Swift, however, employed her friendly offices as late as 1735. Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. XVIII., p. 461. For Rathfarnham, cf. *ibid.*, Vol. IX., p. 515. For Miss Mackfadin, as Swift writes it, *ibid.*, p. 13. By a strange error, the *European Magazine*, in its obituary of their son, calls her "Miss Macpherson, a Scotch lady."

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body"; and when, next year, she breathed her last, it was to him that he addressed those memorable words, "The last act of life is always a tragedy at best."[1] To him Stella on her tragic death-bed entrusted Swift's private correspondence, the publication of which he prevented. He was the sole depositary of her marriage secret.[2] She preferred him to all Swift's friends and appointed him one of her executors. Despite his crippled circumstances, he refused her offer of a legacy, just as years earlier he had rejected Swift's intended preferment of him to the Armagh headmastership. "You cannot make him a greater compliment," Swift avowed, "than by telling . . . before his face, how careless he was in any affair that related to his interest and fortune."[3] In such matters Richard Brinsley was to resemble him, and many other salient characteristics were transmitted to him from his grandfather. The same whimsical sense of deranged honour, the same dupability which Swift remarked in the one and the first Mrs. Sheridan in the other,[4] the same sanguine carelessness and open-handed extravagance, the same struggles with debt and duns, the same pride of independence, infectious gaiety, and delight in highly-bred women, the same vain absence of mind, the same neglect in answering and dating letters, are observable in each.[5] Like his grandson,

[1] Cf. Swift's "Works," Vol. XVII., pp. 84, 173.

[2] Thomas Sheridan, his son and Richard Brinsley's father, gives the particulars in his "Life of Swift." He had good reason to know them, for the correspondence was preserved in his family (cf. Dufferin Papers), and he had the corroboration of Mrs. Sican, the intimate friend of Swift and Stella.

[3] Swift's "Works," Vol. IX., p. 518. For the rest, cf. (*inter alia*) Sheridan's "Life of Swift," *passim*.

[4] In a letter of 1781 to Sheridan's elder sister, which Mr. LeFanu has kindly allowed me to use. She there says that his multiplied undertakings expose him to be duped, and the same cause applies to his grandfather.

[5] For this trait in Dr. Sheridan, cf. Swift's "Works," Vol. XVIII., p. 449. For the other, cf. Vol. IX., p. 519. "He will invite," says Swift of his friend, "six or more people of condition to dine with him. . . . On the day appointed he will be absent and know nothing of the matter. . . . When he is told of this he is pleased because it shows him to be a genius and a man of learning." For his generosity, cf. Sheridan's "Life of Swift," p. 373. He was much lamented by Swift's servant William. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 395. For the passage next to be quoted, cf. Swift's "Works," Vol. IX., p. 518.

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Dr. Sheridan was jovial, like him he repaid the sallies which he provoked with interest, like him he loved *jeux d'esprit*, like him, again, to quote Swift's over-severity in "The Second Solomon," "he was a generous, honest, good-natured man, but his perpetual want of discretion and judgment made him act as if he were neither generous, honest or good-natured." Some coincidences too extend even to their widely different careers. Jealousy caused estrangements from both,[1] and both ended by dying in borrowed houses. The last words of Dr. Sheridan deserve record. It was remarked that the wind was in the east. "Let it blow east, west, south, or north," whispered the doctor, "the immortal soul will take its flight to the destined point."

Something must be said of his typical retreat at Quilca where the two friends perpetrated rough jokes on each other, satirised themselves and the world, and generally illustrated "*Vive la bagatelle*"; where Stella joined the laughter and softened the rudeness; where the Sheridan ladies always felt frightened and uncomfortable;[2] where Shela, the barefooted maidservant, drew forth Swift's praise of the simple life, and fat Mrs. Rebecca Dingley played propriety to the queer inmates. A ruin of memories, it rises in a glen near the Cavan village of Mullagh. The stone walls are mossy and mouldering, silent and lonely. But the silence speaks. In front of what was once a lawn is the well above which Swift used often to dine, and near the well and a black lake, stands the "Rath" or fairy-circle, a steep and grassy knoll ringed round with twenty-one stalwart elms, the shade of which forms a natural tent. In the days of "Manager Tom" (Sheridan's father and Dr. Sheridan's son)

[1] Sheridan's "Life of Swift," p. 393. Swift and Sheridan were temporarily estranged through the jealousies of Martha Whiteway, the dean's meddling housekeeper, kinswoman and legatee. There was, I think, another reason for Swift's bitterness after Sheridan's death against the man who had so long befriended and been befriended by him. Sheridan dared to tell Swift the truth, which was the less palatable as Swift's infirmities of mind and body increased. For his rudeness to others, cf. *ibid.*, p. 388.

[2] So said the eldest daughter, who remembered it. Cf. Whyte's "Miscellany," p. 39.

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this knoll was often boarded over for *al fresco* plays. Behind the house, in the wilderness that was a garden, remain the relics of Stella's bower. A ghostly past broods over the scene. Here was heard the crooning banshee when Sheridan's mother died at Blois, and here, much earlier, one Willy Sheridan urged his Tam o' Shanter gallop and thought he saw a large black flail descending from the moon to thresh the earth, though the incredulous averred that this was only the black ribbon dangling from his hat.

The pedagogue had not inherited Quilca, though so ran the tradition.[1] Miss LeFanu distinctly states that Dr. Sheridan acquired it by purchase from his eldest brother.[2] In 1788, when Sheridan's father died, William LeFanu, whose two sons married Richard Brinsley's sisters, bought the small estate which he had long stewarded for his friend; and in this way Quilca proved the means of uniting the two families.[3]

"Do you love or hate Quilca most?" wrote the dean to the doctor in 1725; "you will make a thousand blunders in your planting, for I will not be with you." Swift was always hectoring his consoler and browbeating him with satire on his ragged economy. Sheridan retaliated by mockeries of Swift's cheeseparing. The grand-inquisitor once brought him up to solemn trial at Quilca and sentenced him to death, but the culprit avenged himself by many a piece of horseplay on the railer at mankind. They were not always rioting. They would pass their evenings in backgammon[4] and the classics, while Sheridan sang to the unmusical Stella and his own discordant wife.

[1] Mr. Fraser Rae has assumed without warrant that it passed into his possession by his marriage, which we know from Miss LeFanu's "Memoirs" of her grandmother brought him an estate in land valued at £500 per annum, and there are also facts, omitted by Mr. Rae, which, save for other evidence, would corroborate his conjecture. The estate had long been Sheridan property. It might, of course, have been mortgaged to Mr. Macfadden, just as part of it was afterwards to be mortgaged by Sheridan's father to Mr. Whyte, his brother-in-law.

[2] "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," p. 31.

[3] Dufferin Papers. From information in a letter of Mr. J. P. LeFanu.

[4] Cf. Swift's "Works," Vol. XVIII., p. 468.

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Here, in what became the "painted parlour," Swift sketched his "Gulliver."[1] The Brobdingnag farmer was none other than a Mr. Doughty, their gigantic neighbour, who at Swift's challenge once carried a Manx pony on his shoulders. Not many miles distant stands the Mount of Moymullagh, with the remnants of a church supposed to have been built by a saint in the fifth century and consecrated by St. Patrick. In its once burial ground and under tombs, some, we are told, of black marble, were laid many generations of the Sheridans. And here, it is also said, an English traveller in 1760 met with Dr. Sheridan's brother, then ninety years of age, groping among the tombs—a veritable "Old Mortality" living amongst the dead. "It is my library," he mused; "I dress the graves neglected by their heirs. It contains more Milesian dust than all the rest of the kingdom put together."[2]

The doctor expired on October 10, 1738, in his sixtieth year. He left a married sister in distressed circumstances.[3] His wife predeceased him, but seven out of their nine children survived.[4] The third daughter, Emily, died young. The eldest, Elizabeth (in her youth, writes Miss LeFanu, a Castle beauty), who kept his house at her mother's death, became a schoolmistress in Dublin, and died in 1796, aged eighty-six. The next, Anne, who was the means of bringing Sheridan's parents together, married a Mr. Sheen, an Englishman originally in the suite of a Lord-Lieutenant and often mentioned in the correspondence of Sheridan's father. The fourth, Hester,

[1] In 1724.

[2] Much of the foregoing is taken, with a few alterations, from the MS. account furnished to the late Lord Dufferin by Mr. James M. Lowry.

[3] Through an accident that happened to her husband. Cf. "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," p. 17.

[4] Miss A. LeFanu, in "The Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan" (p. 17), has conclusively refuted Watkins's contrary assertion. There are some ironical verses (attributed to Swift, but really by Sheridan), which have led, perhaps, to the confusion which Watkins made. The complete list of his children, hitherto inaccurately given, will be found in her pedigree.

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became a Mrs. Knowles and was also a schoolmistress.[1] She was the mother of James Knowles who wrote a dictionary, and the grandmother of Sheridan Knowles the actor and dramatist, who became a Baptist minister in his old age. The youngest, Susan (if indeed she existed), only appears as the great-grandmother of a Miss Josephine Ingham, who acquainted the late Lord Dufferin with some facts, and stated that Swift's manuscript correspondence with Dr. Sheridan descended to her family. She remains, however, wholly problematical, since Miss LeFanu omits her in the full account of her grandfather's brothers and sisters, while Samuel Whyte calls Hester the youngest of the family.[2] Of the sons, James and Hugh died young, the latter leaving descendants. Richard, the eldest survivor, inherited Quilca.[3] He had a son and namesake who became a Dublin King's Counsel, eminent in Sheridan's lifetime, and member for Charlemont in the Irish Parliament through the interest of its earl, the godfather of Richard Brinsley's eldest sister. The younger was the Thomas Sheridan whom we have heard soliloquising, and in whose line the present Sheridans descend. The past Sheridans have now defiled before us and we have reached the schoolmaster on the stage who was the father of the statesman and dramatist.

Born in 1719 at the old King James' Mint-house in Capel Street, Dublin, he was honoured by the godfathership of Swift, whose life, more than sixty years afterwards, he compiled, and to whose monument he devoted the proceeds of a theatrical performance. Swift indeed was his mentor and idol, and to Swift he directly owed those principles of independence which he transmitted to his son, and the lifelong schemes of educational reform which equally hampered his career though they

[1] Cf. Whyte's "Miscellany," p. 39. School-keeping seems to have run in the family. Elizabeth LeFanu, the great Sheridan's younger sister, is advertised as keeping one at Bath some little time after his death.

[2] She might have been Dr. Sheridan's unascertained sister but for the strong likelihood that this sister was Mrs. Brooke, the mother of a playwright who was cousin to "Manager" Thomas Sheridan.

[3] Cf. Watkins, Vol. I., p. 139, where a farm at Quilca, mortgaged to a brother-in-law, is stated to have been acquired from his brother.

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anticipated in no small degree the tendencies of to-day. As early as 1737 the Dean, questioning the lad on his Dublin studies, had enlarged on the need of attention to English. This stuck in Thomas Sheridan's mind and grew into a fixed idea. Through him it produced Churchill's protest against formal scholarship.[1] For the honour of Swift's memory Sheridan battled throughout, and it was a prime cause of Dr. Johnson's attempts to bully and belittle him—attempts which Boswell both exaggerated and involved.[2] From start to finish Thomas Sheridan, scholar and manager, appeared a pedant among Bohemians, and a Bohemian among pedants.

Swift, then, was the lad's first inspirer and in a sense the misleader of his life. Swift stiffened the temperament of one far less volatile than his father or his son, and unlike them both in his peevishness. Early discerning his pupil's promise, he prevailed on Dr. Sheridan to send the lad to Westminster at the age of fourteen. Swift has recorded with pride how Thomas there won a King's scholarship, and with regret how his father's embarrassments compelled a recall before the son could be "sped," as it was termed, to Oxford. At Westminster maybe the boy first formed his exalted views of the theatrical function, for that school was the nursery of many gentlemen actors, including Coleman; in an age too when Mossop, Quin, Barry and Henderson were liberally educated, when Smith, the original "Charles Surface," came from Eton, and Foote from Oxford. At Westminster also began his intimacy with Lord George Germain and with the whole family of Sackvilles, headed by the Duke of Dorset, who remained his firm friend and patron. In 1736 Sheridan entered Trinity College, Dublin, where he greatly distinguished himself. Proud

[1] *Rosciad.*

"Where do these words of Greece and Rome excel
That England may not please the ear as well," etc.

[2] He made out Sheridan to be the aggressor, whereas "The Life of Swift," with its animadversions on Dr. Johnson's attitude towards Ireland's tutelary champion, was published fifteen years after the "Great Cham of Literature" had besmirched Swift in his "Lives of the Poets."

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of his protector and of his lineage, he was not content with the curriculum. He already formed theories of educative rhetoric, of language, accent and prosody. A small circle applauded his efforts, and after his father's death in 1738, the youth of nineteen, warned perhaps by that father's example, declined to become a pedagogue and decided to reform the stage. It sorely needed reformation. Political brawlers and fashionable rakehells disturbed its peace, taste was neglected, and the actors were so jealous of each other that confusion grew worse confounded. Sheridan was ambitious. He thought himself eminently qualified to regulate the chaos and transform the theatre from a cockpit into an academy. An excellent scholar, he aspired to classicise the stage, while his deep, if unmodulated voice[1] and measured gestures marked him out as an ideal impersonator of Addison's Cato. He must, however, have been rather a forcible declaimer than a finished actor, if we may believe the story of his son who, having taken him at his word as the best actor of his day, attributed his father's opinion, when at last he heard Garrick, "to that natural partiality with which we all estimate our own merits."[2] What Thomas Sheridan lacked in every department was the tact which was to characterise Richard Brinsley. It has been well said that for success in life *savoir faire* is more effective than *faire savoir*.

In the January of 1743 the part of "Richard the Third" was performed at the Smock Alley Theatre by "a young gentleman." So great was his success that soon afterwards the name of Thomas Sheridan appeared in the playbill of "Mithridates," and, in a short time, when Quin came over to triumph, the veteran quitted the city in disgust at the reigning favourite. Before 1745, when Swift breathed his last, young Sheridan found himself undisputed master of the Royal Theatre. He next visited London and acted to admiration both as

[1] "Irregularly deep and shrill by fits

. . .

Where he falls short, 'tis Nature's fault alone
Where he succeeds, the merit's all his own."—*Rosciad.*

[2] Taylor's "Records of my Life," Vol. II., p. 26.

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"Hamlet" at Covent Garden and in "Tancred" at Drury Lane. He piqued Garrick's jealousy and offended his pride by a dictatorial though cordial invitation to Dublin, on the understanding, which he always maintained, that profit-sharing should be the basis of their contract. When Garrick came over, Chesterfield, then Lord-Lieutenant, patronised the performance, popularised himself by flattering Sheridan, and yet a few years later was pleased to contribute the magnificent sum of one guinea to the actor's first scheme for "an oratorical academy."

But his progress had been too quick. From the first the tragedian, unbending, yet not without an occasional dash of Captain Costigan's fruitiness, stood on his dignity—a somewhat slippery pedestal. Already a war of pamphlets had raged over his claim to a gorgeous robe for the part of "Cato,"[1] and within the space of eight years he met with two organised reverses, the first of which established his reputation, while the last practically ruined his fortunes.

In January, 1746, one Kelly, the dissolute ringleader of a Mohawk club, incensed at the discipline imposed by the new manager, thrice essayed to demolish the theatre. On the third evening, when a bevy of distinguished beauties were gathered to see Sheridan as "Horatio" in "The Fair Penitent," he leaped on to the stage, forced his way behind the scenes to the actresses' dressing-rooms, and insulted that sentimental adventuress, George Ann Bellamy. Sheridan defended the lady, Kelly attacked Sheridan, and was publicly chastised by him. An uproar ensued, the curtain was rung down, the audience dispersed in factions, and the Kellyites and Sheridanites were the Montagues and Capulets of the hour. For some time Sheridan's life was in danger. Kelly went off vowing vengeance against the player who had dared to be a gentleman, and when he prosecuted Sheridan for assault, declared that he had seen a

[1] "The Buskin and the Sock, being Controversial Letters between Mr. Thomas Sheridan, Tragedian, and Mr. Theophilus Cibber, Comedian." Later on he incensed a fellow actor by hitting him with a javelin that missed its mark in the performance. Cf. Barrington's "Sketches," Vol. II., p. 201.

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THE CH

The last English baronet of this family was SIR HENRY, who died in 1786. (Dufferin Papers.)

REV. PHILIP
(Trin. Coll., Dubli
1695; B.A. and M.
cf. Whyte's "Mis
Clanbeby, Kilmore
1718; Prebendary
Rector of St. Nich
Archdeacon of Gle

REV. WALTER.

DR. RICHARD, = I
Physician. ('ue-
cf.
Irs.
n,"

(*b.* 172

[1] In

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gentleman soldier and a gentleman tailor, but never before a gentleman player. Sheridan bowed and said, "Sir, I hope you see one now." Acquitted amid loud applause, he took a gentleman's revenge. When the rioter was prosecuted and condemned to a heavy fine, he besought Government for its remission, and emerged the most popular man in Dublin.

Among the audience that evening sat two persons long linked with the Sheridan family. The one, Dr. Charles Lucas—"honest Lucas," as he was called—a fashionable physician who celebrated the Bath waters, and an ardent patriot—the Wilkes of Ireland—who two years onwards had to fly for his life from the threats of the Government to France: he is mentioned as "a martyr to liberty" in a very early essay on patriotism by Richard Brinsley Sheridan. He must have been pardoned, for ten years later we find him returned from Harwich and attending Lord Charlemont,[1] when his spirited speech pacified the crowd. With him most probably—for he was her brother's intimate[2]—was a young lady of twenty-two, Miss Frances Chamberlaine, already an authoress and in the following year to become the bride of Thomas Sheridan.

She sprang from that Anglo-Irish stock which we have seen mated to the Sheridans and almost equally associated with Swift. It has been persistently alleged that her great-grandfather was an English baronet, but this is not the case.[3] As a girl of fifteen she had already written a romance, "Eugenia and Adelaide," on a Spanish subject which nearly thirty years later may have suggested the local surroundings of "The Duenna." She kept the secret of her novel as much from her father as Fanny Burney did from hers. That father was yet another of the eccentrics whom the grim Jonathan loved to

[1] "Mrs. Sheridan to Samuel Whyte, LONDON, Nov. 11, 1758." Cf. Whyte's "Miscellany," p. 98.

[2] Four years earlier he had addressed to him a letter of quaint warning against the perils of matrimony. Sheridan MSS. "Lucas, Dublin, to R. Chamberlaine, CHESTER, Dec. 28, 1742."

[3] She descended from a branch collateral to the baronet's. Cf. the subjoined pedigree derived from Mr. LeFanu's authentic information and from notes in the Dufferin Papers.

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collect. Archdeacon of Glendalough, and a man of letters, he had a horror of female education and would hardly allow his daughters to be taught their letters. Frances, the youngest, proved one of the very few literary women of her time who enjoyed a European reputation. She was as sympathetic as she was gifted and modest. Concealing her acquirements, she used them, before she had made her name, to benefit a neglected boy, reputed an idiot till she aroused his faculties. Pensive, gentle, painstaking and patient, she had much to do and suffer in the future, but amid all the buffets of her fate she never ceased to create an atmosphere of goodness and energy for her surroundings. When her father sank into imbecility, she tended his waning years with devotion. Among many famous admirers, Dr. Johnson always paid her his homage, while Dr. Parr, who first met her before he was a master at Harrow, called her "truly celestial," and spoke of her in much the same terms as he did of the "angel" whom Richard Brinsley was to marry. Angelo, long the friend both of the Sheridans and Linleys, well remembered her in his boyhood, and ranks her with Mrs. Cowley and Mrs. Griffiths as "the three literary graces." He adds that she "was inclined to be lusty and had a red face,"[1] a description which contradicts the pale melancholy of her portrait and the seraphic visage of Dr. Parr's rhapsody. Her two brothers were Walter, a clergyman, whose oddities resembled Dr. Thomas Sheridan's,[2] and Richard, a physician, originally in the navy, also renowned for his puns, flights and vagaries,[3]

[1] Angelo's "Rem.," Vol. II., p. 313.

[2] On one occasion he forgot his sermon and preached another extempore; on another he scathed some urchins who mocked the absent-minded parson by preaching on the bears that devoured the children who derided Elisha. He penned some graceful verses called "The Travellers on Fire," a theme which Richard Brinsley was also to handle. Two of its lines describe himself:

"And though my temper's brisk and boon,
I'm often in the vapours."

He lived in Kevin Street. Cf. Whyte, p. 95.

[3] It was he who sent over a tea-chest to the Whytes with the inscription

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and the future guardian of his celebrated nephew's school-days; he married a relative of Lord Hardwicke who was always known in the Sheridan family as "the little good woman." Mrs. Sheridan's mother had been a Miss Anastasia Whyte, of whose three brothers one was a colonel, another a captain in the navy, and the third, Solomon, a captain in the army and for a space governor of the Tower. His natural son Samuel we shall find associated with the fortunes and misfortunes of Mrs. Sheridan's offspring. Her sister Anne married the Rev. John Fish, chaplain of the "Bluecoat Hospital."

Thomas Sheridan's conduct under this ordeal made him Miss Chamberlaine's hero. She at once published a pamphlet which turned the tide in his favour far more than his own "Vindication," and a poem, "The Owls," in which the birds of night were rebuked and abashed by Apollo.[1] In a word, she fell in love with the persecuted actor. It was not long before they met at the house of his sister, Mrs. Sheen, and were betrothed. She formed a great friendship with "Betsy" Sheridan, afterwards Mrs. Knowles, and the copy of a letter from her to her future sister-in-law giving news of her *fiancé* exists among the Dufferin Papers. That Thomas Sheridan was now far from being the crabbed and pompous complainer into which mischances converted him, is shown not

"Tu doces" ("Thou teachest"). Charles Sheridan, Richard Brinsley's elder brother, rallies his uncle on his puns in a letter from Bath of 1771. An unknown correspondent of a much earlier date, in a letter also preserved in the Sheridan MSS., says: "I entirely agree with you in believing you to be really mad; not a little, but very mad," and speaks of his "flights and vagaries." "You soar too high for me," he adds, "and are too frolicsome for my earthly capacity."

[1] It concludes:—

"O Sons of gloom! get brighter sense,
More conscionably speak,
Why should my beams be less intense
Because your eyes are weak;
The fault is yours, if faults you see,
The punishing be mine;
And my complete revenge shall be,
I will arise and shine."

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only by Boswell's praise of his lively conversation,[1] but by a set of verses which Frances wrote on her lover, and which form part of our new material:

> "If every talent, every power to please,
> Sense joined with spirit, dignity with ease,
> If elocution of the noblest kind
> Such as at once inflames and melts the mind,
> Looks strong and piercing as the bird of Jove,
> Address insinuating and soft as Love,
> Politeness such as Art can ne'er bestow
> But from the well-turned mind alone can flow,
> Action by no mechanick rules restrain'd,
> Passion that strikes the Soul because unfeigned,
> If these can form a character complete,
> All these in Sheridan's Performance meet."[2]

They were married in the spring of 1747 and took up their abode at 12, Dorset Street, Dublin, as befitted those whom the Dorsets delighted to honour. The house—a new one, but remote from the theatre—had been chosen on account of being opposite to that of the bride's invalid uncle, Solomon, whose favourite she was.[3] Sheridan and his young wife, like their son not thirty years afterwards, moved in the best society, and personal fascination alone could have brought the wits and nobles to their door. The Lanesboroughs, Charlemonts and Orrerys, with whom Thomas Sheridan long and cordially corresponded, were among their especial friends. So, too, were the Cunninghams, one of whom was afterwards daughter-in-law to that wonderful old Anne, Viscountess of Townshend, who died but one year younger than the century in the "*annus mirabilis*" of 1788 when Richard Brinsley Sheridan reached the summit of his fame. Herself an intellectual giantess, she was always his friend, and lived to see one of

[1] "Sheridan's well-informed, animated and bustling mind never suffered conversation to stagnate." And yet Boswell introduced him thirteen times in depreciation. This is commented on by Whyte in his "Remarks on Boswell's Johnson," "Miscellany," pp. 9, 22.

[2] Sheridan MSS. Contained in an album of family verses kept by Charles Francis Sheridan, Richard Brinsley's brother.

[3] Whyte's "Miscellany," p. 91.

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Sheridan's Father,
from the pastel (probably by Lewis)
(in the possession of Algernon Sheridan, Esquire).

Sheridan's Mother,
from the pastel (probably by Lewis)
(in the possession of Algernon Sheridan, Esquire)

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her sons the intimate of Fox, another an earl, and her eldest grandson a marquis. In after years the novelist Richardson and the Fieldings, Johnson and Boswell, Horne Tooke, Mrs. Cholmondeley and Mrs. Montagu, with all their satellites, reinforced the list, and not long before Thomas Sheridan's death his readings in London were accompanied by breakfasts so fashionable that they rivalled his son's dinners.[1] Within a few years after his wedding he founded the Dublin Beefsteak Club as a meeting ground for the Castle and the green-room, and dared public opinion by installing saucy Peg Woffington in the presidential chair. Yet he was a martinet and a man of regular religious observance, who never missed family prayers and whose favourite toast was "Healths, hearts and homes." This, however, was often accompanied by a well-shaken mixture of brandy, sugar and water, less potent than the Prince Regent's "Diabolino," but, if gossip may be trusted, strong enough in after years to make him drop from his chair while he lectured his two sons on the perils of intoxication.[2] In these early and more light-hearted days before the successful actor had assumed the solemn air of an archbishop in distress, he loved sport and gaiety as much as his father. He got Lewis, the scene painter, to fresco the coved ceiling of the Quilca dining-room, where he dressed portentous dishes with his own hands and welcomed the light and leading of Ireland. Lewis, who painted Peg Woffington, also painted his portrait

[1] In 1784. Cf. "Autobiography and Corr. of Mrs. Delany," Vol. VI., p. 229.

[2] Cf. Lord Holland's "Further Memoirs of the Whig Party," p. 241. This story Lord Holland heard from Dick Sheridan himself. The Sheridan decoction is recounted by Angelo in his "Reminiscences," Vol. I., p. 300, and the Angelos were intimates. When young Angelo went to Paris old Sheridan wrote to him a letter full of sententious advice. The Sheridan toast is given by Miss LeFanu in the "Memoirs" of her grandmother, p. 350. She also says that while in France he regularly read aloud the Church of England service on Sundays, p. 277. His religious feeling was genuine; cf. the passage in a letter to S. Whyte of August 1, 1766. ". . . It is from Religion alone that we can hope for contentment in this life or happiness in a future one," etc. Cf. Whyte's "Remarks on Boswell's Johnson," "Miscellany," p. 25.

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and that of his wife. The "looks strong and piercing as the bird of Jove" are scarcely discernible in the former: the brunette countenance of the latter is more interesting than beautiful, but Mrs. Sheridan was famed for the fairness of her arms and neck and the simple neatness of her attire.[1]

The sun still smiled on the Sheridan household. His managership of Smock Alley Theatre remained prosperous to the tune of some two thousand a year until the second catastrophe of 1754 dashed his hopes and his theatre to the ground. Enough has been said in this chapter to point the capricious vein, the obstinate bent, and the combinations of ancestry that attended the birth of him who at its opening we beheld in the train of Miss Linley. A picture of those entrancing Linleys must be deferred till our narrative reaches her union with Richard Brinsley. Meanwhile daring and mischief, wassail and melancholy hover around his cradle. The Irish fairies have danced over the "rath" at Quilca,

> "And where such fairies once have danced
> The grass is never green."

[1] The authorities for these details are the "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," Whyte's "Miscellany," Watkins' "Memoirs of R. B. Sheridan," Moore's "Life of Sheridan," the Sheridan MSS., the Dufferin Papers, Angelo's "Reminiscences," "Memoirs of Dr. Parr," and various monographs and memoirs.

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CHAPTER II

CHILDHOOD AND BOYHOOD

(1751—1771)

"Que les gens d'esprit sont bêtes."—BEAUMARCHAIS.

RICHARD BRINSLEY BUTLER SHERIDAN was born at 12, Dorset Street, Dublin, towards the close of September, 1751. He was the third child. Thomas, the eldest, was born in 1747, but died in 1750, the June of which year saw the birth of the second, Charles Francis. Then followed in January, 1753, Alicia, afterwards Mrs. Joseph LeFanu,[1] Sackville, born and buried during the theatre riots of 1754, and in 1758 Anne Elizabeth Hume Crawfurd, by her birth in Henrietta Street, a Londoner, and afterwards the wife of Henry LeFanu, her brother-in-law's brother.

The precise day and, indeed, month of Sheridan's birth is unascertained. In assigning September I have followed the family tradition as expressly given by his niece in the memoirs of his mother.[2] Her information rests on the remembrance of Sheridan's eldest sister, who, though she often trips in dates, is unlikely to have mistaken the month when her brother first

[1] The god-daughter and namesake of Alicia Caulfield, Lord Charlemont's sister. Charles Francis bore the names of Charles Gardiner, father of the first Lord Mountjoy, and his own mother Frances Sheridan.

[2] "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," p. 58. Moore also assigns September. Watkins gives "the latter end of October." In recent times, Fitzgerald says "the month of October," and Fraser Rae specifies "October 30." For this there is no warrant ascertainable. Watkins, who derived much slipshod information from Sam. Whyte, is the source of the October theory, which is no doubt based on its nearness to the date of baptism. No mention occurs in the Sheridan Manuscripts of his birth-month, though his wife's is referred to. Nor is there any entry in the parish books of St. Mary's, Dublin, of Sackville's baptism. He lived a very short time, and was probably christened at home.

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saw the light. He was christened on November 4th at the parish church of St. Mary's.[1] All his names, as we know from his niece, were those of his godfather, Lord Lanesborough, though, as regards the Richard, it is probable that his uncle, Dick Chamberlaine, was the second sponsor. By a strange error (if error it be) his first name in the parish register stands as Thomas, that of the child who had died in the previous year. Cross purposes thus pursued him from his baptism to his funeral, when the supposed arrest of his corpse was confidently asserted. It may well have been, however, that his mother wished him to bear the name of her dead firstborn, "Brinsley" being added by request of the Lanesboroughs, so that "Richard" and "Butler" would thus be complimentary after-changes by his father; this would be quite in keeping with the characters of both his parents. It is now impossible to imagine that "The School for Scandal" was written by Thomas Brinsley Sheridan, yet as Thomas Brinsley he may have been christened. As for the "Butler," in no document, including Sheridan's marriage certificate, does it appear. He probably considered more than two Christian names a needless expense of time and trouble, and this retrenchment as one of the few that he could afford to practise. His own children were to be content with one, so he did not repeat his father's waste of eloquence.

Till Sheridan went to Harrow his life belongs to that of his parents, and it is more or less bound up with his father's until the Bath period when we first made his acquaintance. It was changeable and migratory, yet rooted in ancient memories. Illusory fame, old servants, and elusive homes accompany it. The present was often slippery, but the past, always inspiring—a truly Irish conjunction.

Though he was but three years old at the time, Sheridan can hardly have forgotten the shock of the second outburst at the Dublin Theatre in March, 1754, which drove his father away at

[1] I subjoin a copy of Sheridan's baptismal certificate which the rector of St. Mary's, Dublin, has kindly forwarded to me. "1751. Novr. 4th. Thomas Brinsley son of Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan."

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once from home and the kingdom. His Beefsteak Club had long been viewed askance as the political prop of an unpopular Government. What, forsooth, had a player to do with the big-wigs who frequented its jovial gatherings? So, long afterwards, argued those who resented his incursions into the realms of diction. Why should an Irishman teach Englishmen English?[1] These discontents came to a head in the person of one, Digges, a gentleman-actor, smarting under Sheridan's high-handedness, and overheard vowing revenge. To Digges had been entrusted the part of "Alcanor" in a version of Voltaire's "Mahomet," unfortunately imported from Drury Lane. That part enabled him to profit by a growing ferment against Government and Sheridan's patron, the Duke of Dorset, who now sat on the Irish throne. When Digges declaimed:

> ". . . If, ye powers divine,
> Ye mark the movements of this nether world
> And bring them to account, crush, crush those vipers,
> Who, singled out by the community
> To guard their rights, shall for a grasp of ore
> Or paltry office sell them to the foe,"

the whole theatre rang with applause, and the passage was encored; Swift's spirit was not extinct. Though Sheridan must have known how disaffection would interpret "vipers," and though he gave out that the piece would be repeated, he yet proceeded to read a dreary lecture to the actors, in which he dwelt on the disgrace of stealing popularity by "party strokes" or by "any unusual emphasis, gesture or significant look." Like Sir George in his wife's novel of "Sidney Biddulph," he was "rather apt to overdo everything and would exert as much force to remove a feather as to lift an anchor." Digges, finding the cap fit, asked what he should do if a fresh encore were demanded, and was curtly told "to use his own discretion." The next performance took place on March 2nd, and when a repetition of the partisan tirade was required he

[1] Cf. *The Convivial Magazine*, 1775. "An Irishman seems to have come into Great Britain to teach the natives English"; but it adds, "With all his faults he is the best actor on the English stage."

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had the impudence to tell the public that Sheridan had forbidden it. Violent cries of "Manager, manager!" rent the air, Sheridan, convinced that personal mischief was intended, slipped away home, and for a whole hour the malignants awaited his return. The call was renewed. Still, no manager. A loyal cry of "God bless His Majesty King George!" set the Nationalists in motion, and at the end of the third "huzza" the work of destruction began. The benches were torn up, the chandeliers shattered, a legion jumped on the stage and slashed the valuable curtain with their swords; a grate of burning coals deluged the box-room, while a messenger, dispatched to Mrs. Sheridan, told her that the theatre was actually ablaze. Precaution averted this disaster, but none the less the property was wrecked. Nor did Sheridan's misfortunes end here. His wife, who never murmured, brought forth her fourth-born only to see him die in convulsions three months afterwards, and though the Duke of Dorset offered his *protégé* a pension of three hundred a year, the proud stoic declined it. The whole work of nine years was undone. There was nothing left for this mismanaging manager but to let his theatre and make his exit to London.[1]

There he began to act "Hamlet" with Rich at Covent Garden, and was soon able to send for Mrs. Sheridan, who left her children under the care of her husband's two sisters. For that husband everything was constantly sacrificed, and it was rarely that the whole family could live together during most of the chequered years in store. The Covent Garden venture was not a success, and Drury Lane battened on its failure. Indefatigable, though in broken health, Sheridan "thought" he saw "the hand of Heaven pointing out another way of life," the way which "from the beginning" he "had in view." Having

[1] The theatre was let for two years. Mrs. Sheridan alludes to the catastrophe in her "Ode to Patience," occasioned ten years later by her disappointment at the failure of her second comedy. It should be mentioned that when years afterwards Digges revived this play, and, with a malice utterly alien to his victim's nature, advertised it as the play that had undone Sheridan, it was received in frigid silence.

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vindicated his Dublin imbroglio in "The Playhouse Prorogued," he at once girded to his mission as educationalist, and in three weeks composed an essay proving that immorality, ignorance and false taste were due to a defective system which a "Revival of the Art of Speaking and the Study of our own Language" might contribute to cure.[1] He would mend mankind by

[1] "British Education, or the Source of the Disorders in Great Britain, etc." It was first published in 1757 (not 1758, as Watkins mistakes the date). We may here append a complete list of the pedagogue's printed works which form a comment on the "damnable iteration" of his hobby. Besides his known books there is a manuscript at the British Museum (Eg. MS. ff. 131, 132), "Mr. Sheridan's Case," being a "summary" of his Dublin theatrical life from 1747 by himself, "with an appeal to Parliament laying before the Guardians of the Public a proposal for saving the stage in Dublin from the ruin with which it is threatened," at the end of which is a letter to him from "W. B." (Brereton), saying that he has copied the work out as he cannot get one in print.

(1) "A Full Vindication of the Conduct of the Manager of the Theatre Royal, Dublin," 1747.

(2) "The Playhouse Prorogued." Dublin, 1754.

(3) "Oration on Elocution." Dublin, 1757.

(4) "British Education, or the Source of the Disorders in Great Britain." Dublin, 1757.

(5) "An Humble Appeal to the Publick, together with some Considerations on the present critical and dangerous state of the Stage in Ireland." Dublin, 1758.

(6) "Discourses in the Theatre, Oxford, and the Senate, Cambridge." (1758?)

(7) "The Elements of English." (1758?)

(8) "A Dissertation on the Causes of the Difficulties which occur in learning the English Tongue; with a Scheme for publishing an English Grammar and Dictionary upon a Plan entirely new, the Object of which shall be to facilitate the Attainment of the English tongue and establish a Perpetual Standard of Pronunciation. Addressed to a certain noble Lord" (*i.e.*, Lord Bute), 1763.

(9) "A Dictionary of the English Language," 2 vols., 1763 and 1780.

(10) "A Plan of Education for the Young Nobility and Gentry of Great Britain." [An Address to His Majesty]. Dublin, 1769 (and the same year in London).

(11) "Captain O'Blunder, or the Brave Irishman, a Comedy." London, 1771.

(12) [Sheridan also corrected for representation, "Coriolanus," "Romeo and Juliet," and "The Loyal Lover."]

(13) "Lectures on the Art of Reading." London, 1775. [Also in 2 vols.

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rhetoric. Individual failure was to be met by universal theory. And the theory was rather a bore, as Foote realised in his coarse parody of "The Orators," which mimicked Sheridan on the stage. "Would our rulers," urged Foote, "but adopt this scheme, how superior would England be even to the most illustrious periods of Greece and Rome! What an unrivalled happiness for us, what an eternal fund of fame for them. Ye Solons, ye Lycurguses, ye Numas, hide your diminished heads. See what a revolution two laws in a few years have produced. See a whole people sunk in more than Gothic ignorance . . . start out at once profound scholars . . . !"

They settled at Bedford Street, Covent Garden, in a house at the corner of Henrietta Street, which till 1768 remained their London abode.[1] Another on the right at the bottom of Beaufort Buildings was occupied by Dr. Richard Chamberlaine, their counsellor-in-ordinary and the wit of the Templars at the Grecian, the oldest coffee-house in London. Strangely enough, this very neighbourhood was also to be the scene of his nephew's first duel, which took place at the Castle Inn by Bedford Court.

Samuel Whyte, who visited them in their new abode, recounts how he and Sheridan stood one evening at the open window expecting the great lexicographer, still busy with his dictionary. "Take out your opera glass," said Sheridan, "Johnson is coming; you may know him by his gait." Whyte took his glasses and descried a solemn figure stalking with measured but awkward step, and laying his hand deliberately on each of the

the same year in Dublin, "printed for Samuel Whyte by assignment." Also 2nd edition. London, 1781.]

(14) "A Course of Lectures on Elocution with two Dissertations on Language," 1 vol., new edition, London 1781.

(15) "A Life of Dr. Jonathan Swift." London, 1784 [and Dublin, 1785].

(16) "A Short Address to the English Public," London, 1785. [Sheridan also worked at a French and English Grammar, in 1767, and the scheme for a national Academy at New Geneva, near Waterford.]

[1] It has usually been placed in Henrietta Street, but apart from other mentions, old Sheridan in a much later letter to his son Charles, mentions "my old lodgings in Bedford Street."

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stone posts which then guarded the carriages. Missing one of them as he went, he turned back to perform that portentous ceremony which has always puzzled his biographers. At a dinner party in these very rooms Mrs. Chamberlaine, dangling her foot backwards and forwards as she listened, found it clutched by the mechanical see-saw of Johnson's hand, which retained her shoe. "Oh fie, Mr. Johnson," quickly exclaimed the lady. "Nay, madam, recollect yourself," seriously replied the moralist. "I know not that I have justly incurred your rebuke: the motion was involuntary and the action not intentionally rude."[1] It was Mrs. Sheridan that the doctor counselled with regard to her daughter's reading: "Turn her loose into your library. If she is well inclined she will choose only nutritious food. If otherwise, all your precautions will avail nothing to prevent her following the natural bent of her inclinations."[2]

The summer of 1756 recalled Sheridan and his wife to Dublin. He made peace with his audience, he invited Foote, his future satirist, and the Italian dancers, but all in vain. New enemies, in an impoverished city, undermined his fame. Barry,[3] the Orpheus of tragedy, and Woodward, the comic Apollo, founded a rival theatre in Crow Street with rival politics, and "Sherry"[4] grew out of date. Here once more his tact was at fault. He appealed to the public, petitioned Government, even besought Samuel Richardson, then in the full flush of his "Sir Charles Grandison," to enlist Speaker Onslow against this new hotbed of sedition. But Onslow would break no butterflies, and poor Sheridan recurred to his schemes for "perfecting human nature." In December, 1757, with the Duke of Bedford for patron, he gave

[1] Watkins, Vol. I., p. 83.

[2] "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," p. 196.

[3] Sheridan bore no more malice against Barry than he had done against Kelly. In 1775, when the former, broken by infirmity, was laughed down in "King Lear," Sheridan was graciously indignant. Cf. "Memoirs of Mrs. F. Sheridan," p. 81.

[4] So Johnson called him, repeating Swift's diminutive for Dr. Sheridan. Cf. Boswell's "Life" under date May 7, 1773. Johnson's habit of abridging his friends' names made Goldsmith resent "Goldie."

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a fashionable breakfast at the music-hall in Fishamble Street,[1] succeeded by an oration—the same dull oration—"on the instruction of youth," which preluded the foundation of a new "Hibernian Society." Subscribers poured in. Professors were appointed at fabulous salaries to regenerate the young, and Sheridan was made president of the school. Elated with success, he crossed the Channel to further his new project. But no sooner was his back turned than foes, political and theatrical, soon blighted his hopes. An actor, it was said, had no right to direct an academy. Kelly's old taunt was revived, and once more the mob of Dublin would not permit a player to be a gentleman. For a year the Hibernian Society flourished without him, and then died the death of the impecunious. Sheridan shook the dust off his shoes on the thankless city, and transferred his debts and harangues to London. Small wonder that years afterwards, brooding over his "melancholy reflections," the man whose earliest essay had been one on "Affliction,"[2] thus characteristically unburdened himself to his son Charles: "When I look back on my past life it presents a scene of the most cruel treatment by the world, and the most ungrateful by my particular connections." He had been unbosoming himself to Mr. Beaufoy, M.P., an old pupil in oratory, a keen anti-Northite and an incomparable bore:

> "Lo! Beaufoy rises friend to soft repose
> Whose gentle accents prompt the House to doze,
> His cadence just a general sleep provokes
> Almost as quickly as Sir Richard's jokes."[3]

"Beaufoy, who knows my whole history," he resumes, "was saying to me the other day that he had never known a man who had done so much for others, and for whom others had

[1] By an irony he met his creditors in this very place in 1767. Cf. Whyte, p. 83.

[2] "Memoirs of Mrs. F. Sheridan," p. 243.

[3] "Rolliad"; Sir Richard was Sir Richard Hill. In a rare pamphlet, "The Album of Streatham or Ministerial Amusements" (1788), which continues "The Rolliad," it is said of Beaufoy, that he

> ". . . his skill to try
> On Dullness' chords his hand shall lay,
> Pleased with the sound he knows not why."

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done so little;"[1] we can almost hear his fussy cough as he holds forth. This was in the summer of 1780, after an interval of nearly thirty years and endless variations on the theme of his hobby. His unique play bore the congenial name of "Captain O'Blunder."[2] Yet he was a man of real and original ability, highly cultivated and principled, liberal, too, in the education of his daughters; one, moreover, who was wont to convulse the table by his conversation. Alas, poor Yorick![3]

In England, however, halcyon days began with his lectures. His educational ideas were in the main threefold. Like Cicero, he believed that elocution was a science as well as an art, which could train statesmen and forward just ideas of life: that systematic training should be delayed till the age of eight, when study should be specialised, one tutor being allotted to each ten boys, and a due regard paid to their idiosyncrasies; that English should be the basis even in the pursuit of his beloved classics, and that before definite instruction, the "memory should be stored," and grammar with prosody, unconsciously instilled. Finally, he held that a permanent standard could be established of accent, pronunciation and the structure of sentences, a fact surely present to his son's mind when he made Mrs. Malaprop insist on "orthodoxy" that Lydia "might not mis-spell and mispronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do, and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying." "He is now engaged," wrote Mrs. Sheridan three years later, "in a very extensive plan in which the English language

[1] Sheridan MSS. Thomas Sheridan to his son, Charles F. Sheridan, June 22, 1780.

[2] It was an adaptation from the French, written, it was said, in boyhood. Cf. "A New Theatrical Dictionary" (1792).

[3] An epigram by Sheridan on old Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, may be read with interest:

"With her offspring around as she sat at a feast,
Old Sarah, delighted, thus said to each guest:
'Fill your glasses, my lads, and drink health to the root
Whence so many fair branches thus thrivingly shoot.'
'Ah, madam,' quoth Jack, with a bow most profound,
'The branches ne'er thrive while the root's above ground.'"

"Jack" was Lord John Spencer.

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will be set in a new light that few think it is capable of receiving." Few, alas! indeed, as the years passed. This is that very light the pale beams of which we observed irradiating Bath.

The elocutionary part of his theory he put into instant practice, delivering lectures with great success in the Pewterers' Hall, Spring Gardens, and afterwards at Oxford and Cambridge.[1] These gradually became the rage under the countenance of Lord Bute and many distinguished figures in politics and literature. For one of his courses in 1762 no less than sixteen hundred subscribed at a guinea apiece, and they bought his publications at "half-a-guinea in boards." He received private pupils, including Lord Percy, and mended the accent both of Wedderburn and of Boswell, whom Miss Sheridan was to remember as a rather haggard young man, hungry for heroes and in mourning for Paoli. Nor even now was his fame confined to London, for in 1758 he received honorary degrees at both the universities.[2] Two years later he reappeared on the boards and with such success that the critics were split into his faction and Garrick's.[3] Sheridan's "King John" took the town and was commanded by royalty. This provoked Garrick, whose "Faulconbridge" paled beside the tremendous tones of his rival, and the play was countermanded.[4] By the beginning of 1761 Mrs. Sheridan could write that he stood "in high reputation with a prospect of being every day more and more esteemed." At the same time her own fame enhanced her husband's. The first part of her novel, "Sidney Biddulph," took London by storm.

[1] Cf. Mrs. Sheridan's letters of 1758, 1759; Whyte's "Miscellany," pp. 92, 95. Both of the University "Discourses" were published in 1758.

[2] That conferred by Oxford was doubted by the prejudiced Watkins, but both Miss LeFanu and Sam Whyte state the fact.

[3] This is suggested by Churchill in his "Rosciad." Davies, in his "Life of Garrick," frankly owns not only that Garrick, who lived in a whispering gallery, was jealous of Sheridan, but that Sheridan's characteristics were most profitable to the theatre, and that "except Barry he had never found so able an assistant."

[4] Sheridan also introduced a tragedy that made a first-rate success, though as a drama it was at least third-hand, for "The Earl of Essex" was adapted by Sheridan's cousin, Henry Brooke, who adapted from Ralph, who adapted from Banks.

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Richardson was in raptures, and Dr. Johnson said that it was hardly fair that the authoress should make her readers suffer so much, for the romance was essentially one of suffering.[1] In after years Charles James Fox pronounced it to be the best novel in the English language, while it is curious to find Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, at the age of fifty-one, gravely consulting her mother as to whether she might be allowed to read it.[2] If not one of the most affecting, it is certainly one of the least affected romances of its period. Two years later her play of "The Discovery" not only delighted Garrick, who played the title *rôle* of Sir Anthony Branville, but renowned her husband as the impersonator of Lord Medway. Sir Anthony is an old man's part, and when her son's "Duenna" popularised Covent Garden in November, 1775, Garrick revived the mother's comedy at Drury Lane; "the old man," as it was said, was pitted against "the old woman." Money came with success, and in 1763, when Sheridan's upholder, the Earl of Northumberland, reigned at the Castle, he was able to settle with his creditors and so justify his persistent boast that "no one ever lost a shilling by me."[3] He not only compounded with them, but most honourably surrendered £200—the half of his "Hamlet" earnings—in excess of what he was bound to pay by agreement.

The parents brought Charles with them to London, where their youngest daughter was born, while Dick and Lissy were left at first under the charge of their kinsman, William Sheridan, at Quilca, and soon afterwards with Mrs. Knowles, who occupied the Dorset Street homestead in Dublin. The perpetual shifting of their quarters deprived Mrs. Sheridan of these two

[1] "I know not, madam, that you have a right upon moral principles to make your readers suffer so much."

[2] Devonshire House MSS. In the Sheridan MSS. Mrs. Tickell is to be found reading it aloud at Hampton Court in 1785.

[3] Sheridan MSS. Thomas Sheridan to R. Chamberlaine, "at the Grecian Coffee House, Temple Bar, Crow Street, February 7, 1767." This refers to his English creditors at the time. In 1762 Sheridan voluntarily and most honourably remitted £500 to be divided amongst Dublin creditors. Cf. Whyte, p. 77.

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children till the autumn of 1759. Up to the day of her death, eight years was the total of time that Richard Brinsley could spend with a mother eminently qualified to mould his character,[1] and to this motherlessness his eldest sister ascribes his drawbacks in the last letter that he received from her. "How are my dear little ones?" wrote Mrs. Sheridan to Sam Whyte in March, 1759. "Do they often talk of me? Keep me alive in their remembrance. I have all a mother's anxiety about them and long to have them over with me." Nor was she less affected by the continual absences from home which her husband's projects entailed. She took refuge in the society of a Miss Pennington, minor poetess and inditer of "Letters from a Distressed Mother to her Absent Son." Great was her grief in 1759 when, after a sojourn at Bath (the first to associate the Sheridans with that city) her companion died, bequeathing a sheaf of sad mementoes:

> "Oh, name for ever sad, for ever dear,
> Still breathed in sighs and ushered with a tear."[2]

Bath was revisited in 1764, when Mrs. Sheridan went thither and to the Hot Wells of Bristol for her health. This was the occasion of their earliest meeting with the Linleys, and the source of her last unfinished comedy, "A Journey to Bath," which is a satire on Bath characters. Nor in respect of old Sheridan's long, if broken, connection with Bath, should it be omitted that there, when Mrs. Siddons acted after her first London failure with Garrick, the gentleman-actor, always generous, was the first to discern her genius and befriend her. He provided her on an emergency with her stage-wardrobe, and ever afterwards she called him the "father" of her career. When she next appeared at Drury Lane, her triumph as "Isabella" was under the auspices of the young son who in

[1] She left him behind in Dublin when he was three in 1754. From 1756-8 she was with him again. He next joined her in September, 1759, but left for Harrow in December, 1762, and there he remained till 1769. She quitted England in 1764, and died at Blois in 1766.

[2] "Her agreeable conversation," wrote her chief mourner, "was the balm of my solitary hours."

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that year of 1782 had first acceded to office in the Rockingham Administration.

But Richard Brinsley's boyhood must be resumed. Sam Whyte, the natural son of Mrs. Sheridan's uncle, Captain Solomon Whyte, had lately opened a school in Grafton Street, Dublin, under the Sheridan auspices and the sounding title of "Seminary for the Instruction of Youth." Thither the two children repaired, first as day pupils and afterwards, though attended by an old nurse, as boarders. Sam Whyte was long the father's most zealous champion. Indeed, he acted almost as understudy to the arch-reformer of our language. When Sheridan embarked on grammar, Whyte must needs follow his lead, although Mrs. Sheridan told him that he was wise to have burned his treatise. Like his patron, too, he started literary assemblies, lectured on eloquence, and composed several works for which his pupils paid. In his big quarto, "The Shamrock of Hibernian Creases," both Dick Sheridan and Alicia appear as subscribers.[1] He helped to settle Sheridan's debts, and he warmly defended him against the strictures that Boswell fathered on Dr. Johnson. But the loan of a hundred pounds, punctually repaid, caused the wonted, temporary rupture, though the breach was already healed when Boswell's prose epic appeared, and Whyte was reconciled to Sheridan before he died. None the less, he was afterwards

[1] "The Shamrock" was published in 1771. His other works were:

"A Miscellany, etc.," also published as "Miscellanea Nova," and containing besides the remarks on Boswell and a critique of Bürger's "Leonora," an "Essay on the Art of Reading and Speaking in Public."

"The Theatre, a Dramatic Essay." London, 1796.

"Treatise on the English Language," printed in 1761, but unpublished till 1800.

"Beauties of History."

"System of Rhetoric."

"Juvenile Encyclopædia."

"Hints to the Age of Reason."

"Practical Elocution."

His works were collected by his son in 1792, who carried on his school till 1824. Copies of them were given to the prize-winners, and the rest were consoled by his portrait. Whyte was born in 1733 and died in 1811. The school was at 75 (now 79), Grafton Street.

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responsible for much of the unkind candour and slipshod gossip in Watkins' preposterous "Life," which he instigated years before it was given to the world.

Dick Sheridan does not seem to have distinguished himself much at the "seminary," except by lampoons and repartees.[1] The boy, however, was no dullard, and his niece's wrath at the imputation might have been mollified by the thought that masters often entitle their young satirists dunces. He made some progress in French,[2] and laid the loose foundations of that desultory scholarship which, despite assertions to the contrary, he maintained to the end.

There was no lack of variety in the boy's London home, for his father, wearisome yet mercurial, was always up in the clouds or down in the depths. And a crowd of celebrities visited the house. Richardson, Garrick, Dr. Robertson, Mrs. Cholmondeley, Mrs. Catherine Macaulay, that pedant in petticoats, the great Johnson, and eventually Johnson's biographer and shadow, who first came just before Sheridan went to Harrow, were all familiar presences. Though affectionate and warm-hearted, the lad was a dare-devil, nor can his temper have been sweetened by his father's open favouritism of Charles, whose "domestic and sedentary disposition," wrote his mother, qualified him for a life at home and already paraded him on the lecturer's platform. "Last Monday evening," that mother told the schoolmaster, "Charles for the first time exhibited himself as a little orator. He read Eve's speech to Adam from Milton, beginning 'O thou from whom and for whom I was formed.'"[3] Dick and Lissy, we may be sure, occupied front

[1] One of these—not too good—is preserved, but not too authentically. He said of a gentleman's long face that it was longer than his life, and explained himself by quoting "man's life is but a *span*." Cf. Timbs' "Lives of Wits."

[2] Cf. Mrs. Sheridan's letter of November 11, 1758, Whyte, p. 93. In after years he was twitted with ignorance of the language, and it was said in a debate where Brissot's pamphlet on the French Revolution was in evidence, that he pronounced "malheureux" as "malheroo." But his sisters had been in France. He could not speak French, but he could read, and probably pronounce it.

[3] In February, 1762. Whyte, p. 105. She adds that her husband's next "Course" would exhibit "varieties of English composition."

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places in their Sunday best, and being close allies in frolic as in day-dreams, they may have even dared to titter when the prim prodigy of twelve recited some lines always applicable to himself:

"What thou seest,
What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself."

Mrs. Sheridan's correspondence from 1758 to 1762 affords many glimpses of the "lectures," the "practical lectures," the "Dissertation," "the Grammar," and "the Dictionary." In the latter year Sheridan received a pension to encourage his lexicography,[1] shortly after Dr. Johnson had received his own, and received it partly through Sheridan's good offices with Lord Bute. Johnson was already prejudiced, half through Sheridan's hereditary associations with Swift, half because Garrick never concealed his jealousy. Bozzy, however, seems to have fanned the flame, which the pension and Dictionary soon turned into a conflagration. "If they have given him a pension, it is time to give up mine," roared the doctor, yet for the dictator's own pension Lord Loughborough avowed that Sheridan had "rung the bell." On leaving Dublin Sheridan had presented Home, the author of "Douglas," with an inscribed medal as some amends for a concerted effort to decry the tragedy. Johnson, who abominated most Scotsmen, except Boswell and Beattie, at once growled that Sheridan's medal was "counterfeiting Apollo's coin." When, again, aristocratic pupils flocked to his lessons, Johnson observed of one of them, "Nay, sir, if Sheridan taught him, he would have cleared the room." "Why, sir," remarked the same censor on another occasion, "Sherry is dull, naturally dull; such an excess of stupidity is not in nature." And years later, when calumny bruited that the educationalist was "threatening" to quit England for America, Johnson, who detested rebels even more than the Whigs (and a Whig Sheridan was), said, "I hope he will go to America." "The Americans," kindly rejoined Boswell, "don't want oratory." "But *we* can want Sheridan," thundered the oracle, and the

[1] Cf. her own statement, Whyte, p. 111.

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matter was settled.[1] Such bludgeoning was not in Sheridan's manner. Instead of returning the cudgels, he quietly avoided the man who had so often knocked him down. Johnson afterwards granted that the rhetoric-monger was "a good man," and was ready to be reconciled, but Sheridan was not, and they never met again. Sheridan was, no doubt, as Dr. Parr afterwards described him, "wrong-headed and whimsical." But considering Johnson's more than esteem for his wife, his knowledge that her husband was bravely struggling to retrieve disaster, and the fact that he had long been welcomed as a guest, this behaviour was little short of cruel, and a trace of remorse may be found afterwards when the Doctor proposed their young son as a member of his literary club. But bullying was the weak side of Johnson's virtue. Nobody who has followed his treatment of Mrs. Thrale, when she chose to marry the blameless Piozzi and the curtain fell on the Streatham banquets, can fail to discern what a tyrant this good, kind philosopher could prove when his love of mastery was offended. He crushed the widow because she was a rebel who deprived him of comforts, and the dictionary-maker because he set up as a new-fangled rival.

Richard Brinsley never quite forgave these unamiable characteristics, and towards the close of his days he is reported, in a long conversation, to have called Johnson "the booksellers' Goliath, . . . a monster much overrated in his strength," and to have said that he "had great talent but little genius," though "what he lacked in these he made up in a labour which genius would have spurned." . . . "He was an egotist," he continued, "of the superlative order, and surrounded by his imps of the ink-ball, his servitors and self-rendered slaves, he taught himself to believe that he was the Jupiter Tonans of the press"; he "was a giant wielding the hammer of a Cyclops, with a giant's humour in the prostration of the victim whom he had devoted as his prey."[2] There is a grain of truth in this biassed verdict.

[1] Miss LeFanu makes it quite clear that the Americans had invited her grandfather, but that he was disinclined to accept their invitation.

[2] Cf. "Sheridan and his Times, by an Octogenarian," Vol. II., pp. 294—300. The whole passage seems authentic.

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But Johnson has detained us too long. In 1760 and 1762 the Sheridans spent some months at Windsor. There Mrs. Sheridan prepared her "Sidney Biddulph" for the press. It appeared in 1761, was translated into and dramatised in French, and was read on the Continent. Fame came unsought to this unassuming woman. Two years later, and all London applauded her comedy of "The Discovery," but "The Dupe," which trod on its heels, proved a failure on the stage.[1] This disappointment evoked her "Ode to Patience," which her boy remembered in a sentence from one of his youthful letters, where he sighs, "there is nothing for it but to sit down and write hymns to Patience." Undaunted, she still persevered. Not long before her death she composed her Arabian tale of "Nourjahad" (the upshot of a dream), which was afterwards dramatised by Miss Harriet Lee, of Bath, the future preceptress of Betty Tickell.[2] She further left two acts of an unfinished comedy, "A Journey to Bath," which suggested a few points for her son's "Mrs. Malaprop," and now survives in the British Museum. How often in after life, when the stains of the world had soiled that white page of brief companionship, must her figure have recurred to her son Richard, the figure portrayed as that of a tall brunette with a white cap, white hands and white shoulders, simply attired in brown silk, and carrying her snuff-box, as was the mode of ladies when George the Third ascended the throne. Her love for her son was surely not wasted. She watched over his nurture and that of the "little fairy," his sister, as she watched over their luckless father "working his way through difficulties."[3] She rejoiced in the flashes of

[1] Andrew Millar, its publisher, witnessed to its popularity in print by sending her a solatium of £100.

[2] Angelo relates that it was acted by Lady Craven's amateurs at Brandenburgh House. Sheridan helped Lady Craven in her "Miniature Picture," for which he wrote the Prologue. Miss Lee was one of the translators of "Kruitzner," the drama which suggested Byron's "Werner," and the authoress of "The Canterbury Tales." With her sister she kept a famous school at Bath.

[3] He also suffered from a disorder of the head, which tormented him to the end. Cf. Whyte, pp. 96, 97 and 99.

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renown which cheered her husband, the biggest child of them all, his triumphs in 1765 at Edinburgh, where Dr. Robertson presented him with the city's freedom, his reception at Bristol, where his praises were sung in verse by Hannah More, then a self-conscious girl of fifteen, his audience of five hundred in the heart of London. Her patience proved a foil to his harsh, abrupt postures and tones as actor and orator:

> "Why must impatience fall three paces back,
> Why paces three return to the attack?"

And she could sympathise when his softer side found fine expression in "King John."

> "Behold him sound the depth of Hubert's soul
> Whilst in his own, contending passions roll;
> View the whole scene, with critic judgment scan,
> And then deny him merit if you can."[1]

Her death in a strange land far away from the Harrow schoolboy was in truth the greatest loss that Dick Sheridan ever suffered.

Her first stay at Windsor (in March, 1760) decided Sheridan's school, for there it was that the Sheridans became intimate with Charles Sumner, then a young Eton master, "a man of fine voice, fine ear and fine taste," who shared Sheridan senior's fastidiousness in pronunciation,[2] and made it his rule never to praise his pupils. That very summer died the head-master of Harrow, Dr. Thackeray, whose beginnings had been the same as Sumner's,[3] and Sumner was chosen to succeed him. It was then the fashion for Etonians to preside over Harrow School, and Heath, who followed Sumner in 1771, was also an Etonian and an assistant master at the royal college. Thackeray had

[1] "Rosciad." There are verses, however, satirising Sheridan in "King John" in "Garrick's Looking Glass":

> "Cats to grieve have little cause;
> Sheridan gives his Senate laws,
> But princely John declined the head,
> And wished that Sheridan were dead."

[2] Cf. Parr's letter to Moore, "Life of Sheridan," Vol. I., p. 9.

[3] They had both been at Eton and Cambridge. Sumner was only twenty-two.

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HARROW SCHOOL.

from an old mezzotint.

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ruled the hill for fourteen years, having replaced Dr. Coxe, whose daughter became stepmother to Dr. Parr. And Dr. Parr was an Harrovian of Harrovians, born at Harrow, bred there from the age of five to fourteen, its second master in Sheridan's day for four years, and very nearly Sumner's successor. Sumner died and was buried at Harrow, and it was Dr. Parr, the Latinist of tombs, who composed his epitaph.

Through Sumner, then, Dick Sheridan was sent to Harrow, while his brother Charles was kept at home. "Dick," wrote his mother at the close of 1762, "has been at Harrow School since Christmas. As he may probably fall into a bustling life we have a mind to accustom him to shift for himself." He was in truth intended for the Bar, although in 1766 Lord Townshend was to offer a commission in the army for both of Thomas Sheridan's young sons.[1]

Harrow had been steadily rising in importance since 1715, when it began to afford a refuge to the sons of Jacobite peers. Some time before Sheridan entered the school its archery contests had given it a *cachet* outside scholarship, and it was the custom of more than one patrician family to send their sons at a tender age both to Harrow and Eton.[2] But in the main it was a nursery of professional men, and when Sheridan joined it the future Sir William Jones, the future Dr. Parr, who befriended the lad, and Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, afterwards an Orientalist and eventually a mad fanatic, were its names of promise.[3] It still presented the appearance of a

[1] For these statements cf. "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," pp. 254, 325. The marquis at the same time put both the daughters on the "Concordatim," *i.e.*, free education list, but after four years their father *more suâ* omitted to renew the necessary application.

[2] The Hamiltons, for example.

[3] For Halhed cf. also *post*, p. 287. He is mentioned in Parr's "Life" as Parr's contemporary, and so he appears in all the "Lives of Sheridan." But then they have also gone astray as to the date of Parr's assistant mastership. He went, as we shall see, to India, published a work on the Gentoo Code, which he dedicated to Warren Hastings, returned in 1785 as his adherent, conferred with Sheridan, sat in Parliament for Lymington, and then espoused the cause of the mysterious Brothers who announced himself as the Messiah to George the Third. He composed a confused

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village grammar school, with a small cluster of adjacent boarding houses. Sumner's received Sheridan, and its matron, Mrs. Purdon, with whose child he used to play, soon became his warm friend and admirer. For the first span of a seven years school-tide the little fellow was very "low-spirited," taunted as a player's son (though his sharp tongue soon turned the tables), frequently in tears and even after four years, when his parents repaired to Blois, downright unhappy.[1] Except for their brief sojourn with Sumner[2] he saw next to nothing of them till 1768, when his father and one of his sisters revisited him. His holidays were passed alone, sometimes at Harrow,[3] sometimes at the house of a Mr. Aikenhead, "a splendid West Indian" residing at Richmond, and sometimes with the Parkers, Dick's future hosts at Waltham, and the foremost among his father's English intimates. Among his school friends he counted the senior boys Parr, Jones, and Halhed, one Richard Archdall, a Greek scholar, who seems to have been with him at Whyte's, and Glanville, Horne, and Cummings, of whom nothing is known but their names. Lord Robert Spencer, long to be his associate, and Robinson, the future husband of "Perdita,"

pamphlet on the subject,—"Testimony of the Authenticity of the Prophecies of Richard Brothers and of his Mission to Recall the Jews. By Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, M.P. London, printed for H. D. Symonds, No. 70, Paternoster Row, 1795."

[1] Lord Holland's "Further Memoirs of the Whig Party." "He was slighted by the masters and tormented by the boys as a poor player's son." School bills, adds Lord Holland, were "irregularly paid by his father." And cf. "Creevey Papers," Vol. I., p. 53. "He said he was a very low-spirited boy, much given to crying when alone, and he attributed this very much to being neglected by his father, . . . left without money and often not taken home for the regular holidays." This passage occurs in a long recital which Creevey says that he heard from Sheridan in 1805, adding that his recollection is to be trusted. It is full of inaccuracies and misstatements, but the substance of this portion chimes with Lord Holland's account, and must be true. As to Mrs. Purdon, cf. "Memoirs of Mrs. F. Sheridan," p. 257. He was greatly affected at hearing of her little daughter's death some years after he had left Harrow, and Mrs. Purdon sent him a mourning-ring in memory of his playmate.

[2] In 1764.

[3] Cf. his letter of March 2, 1765, to his uncle Richard Chamberlaine. Sheridan MSS. Cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 72.

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were also fellow-Harrovians. In course of time his days of misery vanished, and Sheridan gained praise and popularity. The heir of the Duke of Grafton, who came to Harrow soon after Sheridan left, used to relate that he found his memory preserved with affection, "his poems repeated, and a room called after his name."[1]

At Harrow Parr entered into his life,—Parr, who in due course was to be regarded as the Whig Dr. Johnson, to write learned treatises, look "Pomposo" to the life, and be responsible for Lady Byron's Latin. Parr was four years Sheridan's senior and the great classic of the school when he was a fourth-form boy. Parr is said even then to have shown the boy sympathy,[2] and years afterwards he had reason to remain his grateful enthusiast. A long-standing confusion about his Harrow relations to Sheridan must be corrected. He has always been represented as his master from the first, but it was not till 1767, two years before Dick left the school as a member of the "upper fifth," that Parr quitted Cambridge to be Sumner's assistant.[3] Parr's advent as master coincided with Sheridan's happiest school days, and he is our chief authority for them. On this topic he wrote two letters to Moore, another to Miss LeFanu, and a fourth, which has never been published, to Mrs. Tickell, when Sheridan's son Tom was committed to his care. The last may be taken first, and perhaps with a grain of salt, though its recipient, who knew him well, believed in its

[1] Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 148. For the preceding, cf. "Memoirs of Mrs. F. Sheridan," p. 253. For Archdall, cf. Moore's "Life," Vol. I., p. 7, the passage already cited from Moore's "Journal," and the lists of pupil subscribers in Whyte's "Shamrock." The Duke of Grafton quoted to Moore a translation by Archdall from Pindar. The information about Robinson the writer owes to his old Harrow friend, Mr. M. G. Dauglish.

[2] "I have heard him relate with tears in his eyes that he never met with kindness at school but from Dr. Parr," Lord Holland's "Further Memoirs of the Whig Party," pp. 240, 241. Lord Holland has got hold of the wrong end of the stick in his recollection of what Sheridan told him. It could not have been as master in 1767 after five years of school life, but as elder boy in 1762 that Parr first cheered up Sheridan.

[3] Cf. Lillo's "Life of Parr." Yet Watkins actually intimates that Parr went to Cambridge after his schoolmastership.

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sincerity. "I never took up my pen with more pleasure and cordiality," it runs, "than I now do to answer the receipt of yours. The Brilliancy of Sheridan's Wit, the Soundness of his understanding, the manly Firmness of his temper, and the unfeigned and unalterable Generosity of his Heart have from his Boyhood to this moment fixed him in my Regard and given me an Interest in his Happiness." It will be remembered that Captain Costigan too, on a famous occasion at Chatteris, dilated on "generositee," the "Beautee of its women and the manlee Fidelitee of its men." It might have been fancied that Parr also hailed from the sister-island instead of from hard-headed Yorkshire, did we not recollect that his "boy Dick,"[1] as he always called him, was one day to get him preferment. None the less the Doctor's early attachment to Sheridan was genuine. He had known him as comrade and pupil, from the first he discerned his talents, and as a warm Foxite at the date of this eulogy, he liked him none the worse for his irregular vein. When Parr was once asked his opinion of a Bohemian wit, "Sir," he answered, "he is the very brandy of genius mixed with the stinking water of absurdity."

Every public school man, certainly every Harrovian, will call to mind some boy, indolent, winning, brilliant without book, harum-scarum, and often Irish, who not only attracts his fellows, but in his worst scrapes disarms the wrath of his masters. There is such a way with him. That smile, that sauciness and audacity, are irresistible. His frank good humour, his brisk reply propitiate the providence that waits on the imprudent, while the pout of his impertinence undoes all the bulwarks of gravity. His very laugh, innocent if reckless, brings back youth to the pedant as for a moment he catches the infection of its ring. But such a spell is not learned any more than its owner's lesson. It is the laughter of Pan, the natural element of one careless, frolicsome, and unamenable.

Such by all accounts was Sheridan at Harrow. "His eye, his countenance," wrote the ebullient Parr, "were striking.

[1] Sheridan MSS. Mrs. Tickell to Mrs. Sheridan (1785).

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His answers to common questions were prompt and acute. He knew the esteem and even admiration which somehow or other all his schoolfellows felt for him. He was mischievous enough, but his pranks were attended by a sort of vivacity and cheerfulness which delighted Sumner himself." He adds that there was no vice in him, and that he showed "vestiges of a superior intellect." In another letter he says that though none regarded him as a good scholar, "all were impressed with the distinct notion that his natural powers were uncommonly great."

But his Greek and his diligence were woefully out of gear, and here follows a distinct scene. Sumner is away. Parr takes the upper fifth. Sheridan is called up to construe, and made to stand "near the head-master's desk where the voice of no prompter could reach him." He is "teazed and probed," shamed into some grammar and preparation. He has just "enough industry to protect him from disgrace,[1] while he seldom incurs the lashes of the birch, locked in reserve behind the Fourth-form Room pulpit, nor far from the name of 'R. B. Sheridan' carved on the panels."

Another episode was remembered by his sister. On the "occasion of the grand annual contest for the silver arrow," Richard Brinsley, piqued perhaps into learning, did not compete. Strange to say, he distinguished himself "by the delivery of a Greek oration." Dr. Chamberlaine, who doled out his irregular supplies, was relieved to think his nephew not only a scholar but an economist, for the satin archery suits were expensive. Dick, however, would never be baulked either of joke or finery. The speech—haply from that Demosthenes whose "four orations" Parr declares him to have mastered—had to be delivered "in the character of a military commander," for Demosthenes had fought and fled at Chæronea. At a time when Garrick could enact "Richard III." in a dragoon uniform, Master Dick calmly ordered the scarlet and gold regimentals of "an English general officer," and thus resplendent did honour, doubtless, to his colours. And then that happened which the scapegrace designed. Uncle Richard received the bill, and young Sheridan a severe

[1] Parr's account, Moore, Vol. I., pp. 7 and 8.

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dressing. But the rogue had his tongue in his cheek. "He respectfully replied that as the speech was to be delivered in a martial character, he did not think the effect would have been complete without an appropriate dress, and that indeed so deeply was he himself impressed with that feeling that he was sure if he had not been properly habited he could not have delivered a word of the oration."[1] More than twenty years later he was to rebuke Lord Belgrave in the House of Commons for misquotihg Demosthenes about Philip of Macedon.[2] May it not have been this very speech that was then brought into requisition? On another and earlier occasion the same peer was corrected by Sheridan in a line from Homer, and this may account for the myth of his sham quotation from the "Iliad,"[3] to his boyish knowledge of which, however, Parr distinctly witnesses. There is no doubt that though no scholar, the young Sheridan stored much of those half-conned classics in his powerful memory. Charles Sheridan, the son of his second marriage, records on the margin of a page in Moore's biography, which sniffs at the orator's learning, that he had often seen Lucan's "Pharsalia" by his bedside. Parr further testifies that Sheridan remembered his Virgil and maintained a real grasp of Cicero's speeches. And though Watkins, in his needless biography, sneers at his scholarship, yet many of Sheridan's speeches show that he could instance Virgil and even Lucian with effect, while a scrap

[1] "Memoirs of Mrs. F. Sheridan," pp. 254, 255.

[2] In January, 1789, on the Regency Bill. On December 15, 1792, when Fox brought forward his motion for negotiation with France before war should be declared, Sheridan again recurred to Philip of Macedon. "As Philip," he said, "demanded the orators of Athens to be delivered up to him as his most formidable enemies, these gentlemen [*i.e.*, the ministers] must have all the democratic metaphysicians of France extirpated, or they cannot sleep in their beds." Cf. "Speeches," Vol. II., p. 137.

[3] As regards this instance of Sheridan's Homeric correction, myth represents him as having said, "Ton d'apomeibomenos prosephe Sheridanios heros." Fraser Rae considers the story as a libel on the later and Demosthenean incident, but it is, in fact, a travesty on the former. Among Sheridan's political pasquinades is one on Lord Belgrave's ignorance of Greek, beginning—

"Lord Belgrave, Lord Belgrave,
O why look so hell-grave!"

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in his handwriting about a bet, declares "that it was Alcibiades who threw himself before the waggoner's hearse to compel his waiting till the grave was finished."[1] We have already marked him dabbling in Theocritus. His "steps," commented Parr, were "noiseless," and his "taste silently improved."

Of his school pranks there is the wonted Apocrypha—

> "His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,
> Robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets."[2]

It was said that on a barring out he refused to give up the names of the conspirators, insisting on his word of honour being taken as to those who were not implicated. Such stories are the coin current of biography. But Parr tells us—nor can he be doubted—that the lad kept an "apple loft" with the aid of young pilferers, and successfully dared his master to detect them. Only two letters remain from Sheridan at Harrow. Both are addressed to his uncle, and both concern clothes. In the first he declares that his garments are so shabby he is "almost ashamed to wear them on a Sunday," adding that he would rather spend the holidays at Harrow than at Richmond. The second is penned in his misspelt boyish scrawl not a week after he received the news of his mother's death, which occurred at Blois on September 26, 1766:—

"Dear Uncle,—It is now almost a week since Mr. Somner told me the mellancholy knews of my poor mother's death, and as Mr. Somner has not heard what time my Father will be home, he desires me to write to you about mourning. I have wrote to Riley who with your orders will make me a suit of Black. I should be obliged to you if you would let me know what time you expect my Father. You will excuse the shortness of my letter as the subject is disagreeable.

"From your affectionate nephew,

"R. B. SHERIDAN.

"P.S.—I must also have a new hat with a crape and black stokins and buckles. I should be glad of them on Saturday."[3]

[1] Sheridan MSS. As late as 1804 an anonymous poet of Worcester dedicated a book with a classical quotation to Sheridan's fine taste.

[2] Cowper, "Tirocinium."

[3] Sheridan MSS., facsimiled in Rae's "Sheridan," Vol. I., p. 72.

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Despite the coldness of these words, he was truly orphaned, and Harrow for the nonce became his home. For the next three years his brother and sisters were in France, his father absent, lecturing or performing, and busy with those grand educational schemes which were to culminate in an Address to His Majesty the King. Dick Sheridan long continued to love

> ". . . . . the schoolboy spot
> We ne'er forget though there we are forgot."

On Sumner's death in 1771, we are told that Sheridan mourned him "as a father." When his own father died, he wanted him to rest next to Sumner in the yard of Harrow church, "the only visible church," as Charles II. called it. In 1782 Sheridan, already famous, resumed his abode at Harrow, this time in the Grove, one of those white Georgian mansions which still adorn the hill. Sheridan's study, the fine old marble mantelpieces, the spreading cedar outside, can still be seen. So can a spot in the garden, commanding the long view towards Windsor, which tradition asserts to have been his wife's favourite nook. The red brick buildings, once his stables, still front the climbing high road, and a coloured print of "Mr. Sheridan's stables at Harrow" is yet extant. In the Grove's garden Fox and Burke and Fitzpatrick met and foregathered. From the Grove Mrs. Sheridan addressed some charming letters to her "dear LeFany," his sister Alicia. Through Sheridan, her brother William Linley entered Harrow. Harrow surely owes some memorial to one so eminently Harrovian. Nor is it fanciful to suppose that his keen satire already employed itself on the puppet-show of the young.

> "Still jaunty Acres walks our cricket field;
> You know him by his swagger and his smile
> And stout O'Trigger who 'would rather wield
> Two swords himself than seek to reconcile
> Two friends'; nor is the Malapropian style
> Unrepresented in these learned haunts.
> Thine was a genius subtly versatile,
> That often flashes but that never flaunts;
> True Irishman, no venom lurked beneath thy taunts."[1]

[1] Harrow "Tercentenary Prize Poem" (1871).

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But we must return to the father. Sheridan senior, beset by difficulties in Dublin, obtained a "letter of license" to compound with his creditors. These, however, only waited to grasp his professional profits before they declined to sign the document which would have set him free.[1] His professing friend, George Faulkner, the printer, actually plotted his arrest. Warned in time by Whyte, he escaped to London, visited his son at Harrow, and in September 1764 took his family to Blois. There they lived happily on a fifth of what would have commanded comfort in England. They made new and interesting friends, an old French General, a Franco-Canadian Colonel who petted the children, Madame Hemin, the widow of an English Jacobite, who proved a veritable fairy godmother, a young monk who eventually renounced his vows, and a deserted beauty whom Mrs. Sheridan befriended. The father, sighing that he was forgetful and forgotten, toiled on at grammars and dictionaries, the mother at her literary ventures, the children at French and music. Suddenly good tidings reached them. An English Act for insolvent debtors had been passed, and in 1766 influential friends pressed Sheridan to profit by it. He wavered, but they worked zealously on his behalf in Dublin; there was the more need for decision since a whole year of his government pension remained unpaid. It was hoped that his petition, favoured by great names in the Irish Parliament, might prevail without personal attendance.[2] But several of the high and mighty proved fickle, an opposition was raised, and Sheridan was on the verge of setting out for Ireland when his wife was seized with her last illness. She was buried at the end of the month in the inclosure of a Protestant family. Not only was this exceptional privilege accorded, but her funeral, at night and

[1] They received far more than the half of the profits to which they were entitled, no less a sum than some £668 passing into their hands, while the actor at the moment of his success only kept about £112 for his own use. Cf. the accounts from November, 1763, to April, 1764, given in Whyte's "Miscellany," pp. 78, 79.

[2] These facts are given by Whyte in great detail. He elaborately refutes Boswell's mis-statement that Sheridan had an Act passed in his favour.

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by torchlight, was followed by the Catholics who loved her, and by a military escort. Her husband was desolate indeed. "I have lost," he wrote, "what the world cannot repair, a bosom friend, another self. My children have lost—oh, their loss is neither to be expressed nor repaired. But the will of God be done." After bestowing them at St. Quentin, he landed in England, and by the close of October, appeared in Dublin, where his affairs were more or less satisfactorily arranged.

Three years passed before his son quitted the school which had so long sheltered him. Parr pressed for an Oxford education, but the paternal finances could not bear the strain, so in 1769 young Sheridan drove to London, and joined the widower in Frith Street,[1] near Soho Square and that new home of gaiety, the Pantheon. Young Sheridan thus found himself alone in the heart of Bohemia, not too safe a beginning for a youth of his uncertain temperament and prospects. The solitude, however, was soon broken. His brother and sisters came over from France, and the household became a merry one. Old Angelo resided close by, in the spacious Carlisle House which contained his fencing and riding schools. His daughter Kitty was already intimate with the Sheridan sisters, and his son Henry with the brothers. Both families were accomplished amateurs. The Linleys, too, were performing in London, and now it must have been that Sheridan first beheld them. Though Elizabeth was just fifteen, and Mary only eleven, both seem to have assisted at their father's concerts, while "Betsy" figured more than once on the stage. Indeed, from a passage in one of Mary's letters, young Dick himself seems to have purposed an appearance on the boards. When Mrs. Jordan first enchanted London as Peggy in the "Country Girl," during October, 1785, the then Mrs. Tickell thus wrote to the then Mrs. Sheridan: "I could not help looking back at past days during the Play as, if you have recollection of the circumstance, it was in *this* play, altered purposely by Garrick, a certain *Friend* of *Your's* was to have

[1] After a short stay in King Street, Chelsea.

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made an honourable and delicate entrée into the *World*."[1] Remembering that her brother-in-law is constantly called "friend" in this correspondence, her allusion probably points to Sheridan, whom his father must have kept from a career which had proved so disastrous to himself. In after years Dick himself was most reluctant that his wife should in any way be mixed with the theatre, and his sensitiveness displayed itself—as we glean from the same series of letters—when her impersonation of "Ariel" in some private theatricals at Wynnestay was scented out by the newspapers.[2]

But if young Sheridan was saved from the stage, he never ceased to remain a Thespian. Angelo recounts how when his own father hesitated over his costume for a Pantheon masquerade, Dick it was who dressed him as a conjurer, and struck off an advertisement of his unrivalled capacities:—"Any gentleman or lady may lend him five or six guineas, which he puts into his pocket—and never returns if he can help it"; "Any nobleman, gentleman, or lady, may look him full in the face and—see whether they know him or not."[3]

Dick's best friend was his eldest sister, Alicia. She had long looked forward to their meeting, and her feelings may be gathered from a letter of retrospect addressed after his death to his widow:—"We returned to England," she wrote, "when I may say I first became acquainted with my brother—for faint and imperfect were my recollections of him, as might be expected from my age. I saw him, and my childish attachment revived with double force. . . . The same playful fancy, the same sterling and innocuous wit that was shown afterwards in his writings, cheered and delighted the family circle. I

[1] Sheridan MSS. Mrs. Tickell to Mrs. Sheridan (October, 1785), and for the date cf. Boaden's "Life of Mrs. Jordan," Vol. I., p. 69. Garrick's adaptation was from Wycherley's "Country Wife." It was first produced in 1766.

[2] In 1786. Not long before, Mrs. Tickell's letters to Mrs. Sheridan mention too that Sheridan's little son, Tom, was also cast for a small theatrical part.

[3] Angelo's "Rem.," Vol. I., p. 89. Old Angelo besides being master of *manège* and professor of equitation, sometimes officiated as master of the ceremonies at the Pantheon.

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admired—I almost adored him. I would most willingly have sacrificed my life for him as I in some measure proved to him at Bath. . . ."[1]

The father had just published his grandiose "Plan of Education," which he dedicated to his sovereign, nor did he neglect the training of his two sons during their year in Frith Street.[2] He engaged a Mr. Lewis Ker to teach them Latin, and thence it may have been that Sheridan derived those "anecdotes of the Augustan age," which Dr. Parr attributes to the erudition of Sheridan senior. Anecdotes of the Augustan age do not sound exhilarating or much in Sheridan's manner, but they fully accord with the spirit of Ker's surviving letters, which helped Sheridan and his friend Halhed to place their booklet on "Aristaenetus." Perhaps it takes many bores to form a genius; a portentous bore Ker seems to have been. He actually concludes one of his epistles with a solemn supplement in blank verse beginning, "Yours of the 7th and 6th are now before me"; while in another, noting that the booklet had been fathered on Dr. Johnson, he hasards the profound remark that "the critics are admirable in discovering a concealed author by his style, manner, etc." Moore asserts without warrant that Ker tutored Charles Sheridan only. However this may have been, Ker proved a fatal preceptor, for in after years when Charles became influential, he pestered him on family business, and then falsely accused him of mismanaging his property, a charge which the malicious promptly transferred to the innocent Richard Brinsley. But Ker's conduct was probably due to his incipient madness.

[1] Sheridan MSS., and quoted Moore, Vol. I., p. 14.

[2] Thomas Sheridan's treatise will still repay perusal. It is called "A Plan of Education for the Young Nobility and Gentry of Great Britain. Most humbly addressed to the Father of his People, by Thomas Sheridan, A.M. London: Printed for E. and C. Dilly in the Poultry, 1769." The long dedication begins "Sire," and Richard Sheridan's mock-dedication of his "General Fast" in 1775, also begins in the same way. Old Sheridan's plan for a school is very modern. A full classification of forms for different professions is specified, and he sketches a course of English literature He does not omit to quote from his forbear, "the great bishop of Cloyne."

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The careless Dick did not wholly trifle away his time. He taught young Angelo rhetoric in return for his father's fencing lessons,[1] nor was he idle with his pen. There are five of Sheridan's manuscript compositions that probably belong to this period, since they are all in his youthful handwriting. The earliest is a fragmentary sketch of a play founded on "The Vicar of Wakefield," which Sheridan tackled in his last year at Harrow. Moore has given a short extract, one sentence of which foreshadows something of "Joseph Surface." "Here's a pretty fellow," says the villain to his remonstrant friend, "who has let his conscience sleep for these five years, and has now plucked morality from the leaves of his grandmother's Bible, beginning to declaim against what he has practised half his lifetime." The piece breaks off before the arrival of the sham ladies from London, and in a line or so of scenario it is characteristic of Sheridan that even thus early he seeks to refine their conversation.

The next is a long essay on versification in the form of notes for a critique on Dr. Foster's "Genius of Pope." It is interesting as showing the influence of the elder Sheridan's theories, as illustrating the son's independence of mind and the lyric bent which was already trying to find expression. It certainly would not have pleased Mr. Ker, for it opens as follows:—

"I never desire a stronger proof that an author is on a wrong scent in these subjects than to see Quintilian, Aristotle, etc., quoted on a point where they have not the least business. All Poetry is made by the Ear which is the real judge. It is a kind of musical rithm [*sic*]. If then we want to reduce our practical harmony to rules, every man of knowledge of his own language, and of a good ear, is at once competent to the undertaking. Let him trace it to musick. If he has no knowledge let him inquire. We have lost all notion of the ancient accent, we have lost their Pron[o]unciation, and all puzzling about [it] is ridiculous, and trying to find out the melody of our own verse

[1] Cf. Angelo's "Reminiscences," Vol. I., p. 299 (already cited).

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by theirs is still more so. We should have had all our own metres if we had never heard a word of their language. This I affirm. Every Nation finds out for itself a natural melody, and we may say as of Religion, no place has been discovered without Musick. . . . What then have the Greeks to do with our musick? It is plain that our admiration of their verse is mere Pedantry because we could not adopt it." Sheridan next derides the use of "Graduses" in determining prosody, he examines the rules of accent, and he argues that "our verse depends on *time* and *quantity* only; we may vary accent as we please and the propriety is in doing so melodiously. . . . We have no word, taken single, in our language accented—the Scotch and perhaps the Greeks had": and "what is called a monotony is more generally a monotone as to quantity. If by accent we mean high and low, we have no such thing in our language. . . ." He instances a Greek sentence. "If the accent be on the vowel the syllable is always *longer*, if on the consonant it is always *louder*." In fine, he bases real accent on music. "A verse should read itself into harmony, else if it depend only on the chant of the Reader there is no such thing as actual rithm." And with "let us try pure Iambics," and a long discussion of emphasis, this boyish treatise comes to a close.

The third is an essay on Patriotism. It may belong to a somewhat later period, but as it is wholly new matter, it shall be disposed of here.[1] The argument is more curious than correct. "Patriotism," he defines as "a benevolent hope for the welfare of the Society to which we belong." He ridicules the notion that patriotism springs from affection to the native soil. It is the love, he thinks, of "Society or *Government*, for it is the Government that makes a *Country* an object for

[1] It contains mention of "young Johnny Townshend" who must be the Lord John Townshend who became his close intimate shortly after his marriage. It is even possible that Townshend was with Sheridan at Harrow, for Lord John, in a letter written immediately after Sheridan's death, observes generally that he and Sheridan "lived together in the closest habits of intimacy from earliest life." Cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 174.

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Patriotism to work on." "The inhabitants of England were once not fellow-countrymen. It would once have been Reason not Patriotism in an Essex man to have wished well to Kent; Government has connected them. The seat of Government could not be removed to America." Patriotism therefore is local by virtue of Government alone. "An Englishman's son born in France and living there, what is his Patriotism?" True, he resumes, "Government must be connected with power," but for a patriot to sacrifice "the natural feelings in favour of his country," is "horrid" or "absurd"; "Quintus Curtius had no more merit than his horse." On the other hand, "How noble," he exclaims, "was Epaminondas," whose "first thought after the victory was, 'this will affect everyone.'" The young friend of all mankind esteems such a sentiment as more than "twenty speeches of one's country," and he finds Addison's "Cato" "unnatural." The ancient Patriots, he concludes with some humour, "were generally in the Ministry." As Sheridan grew older he certainly did not base the idea of patriotism on attachment to the Government. On the contrary, he based it on opposition.

Even from his school-days his eyes were fixed on politics. In 1769 Junius was directing the full force of his fireworks against that "ominous vibration of the pendulum," the Duke of Grafton, who had become first lord of the Treasury by being all things to all men. Grafton had rounded on Wilkes, whom he had once protected, invaded the very liberties for which he had pleaded, been harsh to the America which he had fondled, and had now turned from a "King's enemy" into an obsequious courtier. Junius held the field, and the *Public Advertiser* rang with blast and counterblast, when young Sheridan took up his pen in ironical defence of the minister after the manner of Swift. He gravely supposes a contention as to whether the first minister ought not to be beheaded. Would his decapitation, he asks, set an effective example? "By pursuing the methods which they propose I allow," he says, "the impression would be stronger at first, but we should consider how soon that wears off. If indeed his crimes were of such a nature as to

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entitle his head to a place on Temple Bar, I would allow some weight to their argument. But in the present case we should reflect how apt mankind are to relent after they have inflicted punishment; so that perhaps the same men who would have detested the noble lord while alive and in prosperity, pointing him as a scarecrow to their children, might after being witnesses to the miserable fate that had overtaken him, begin in their hearts to pity him. . . ." Turning next to the charge of fickleness and unpunctuality, he affects to vindicate Grafton's steadiness and resolution. "I have known him make the Council wait, on the business of the whole nation, when he has had an appointment at Newmarket. Surely this is an instance of the greatest honour." An interview too had been arranged with the firebrand Wilkes, "But His Grace did not see him:—no, he was a man of too much honour; he had *promised* that evening to attend Nancy Parsons to Ranelagh and he would not disappoint her, but made three thousand people witnesses of his unpunctuality."[1] Thus might Bolingbroke have satirised Walpole in the *Craftsman*, but Sheridan impeaching unpunctuality must have made even himself smile.

When the light-hearted Lord North succeeded a year later to the Duke "whose patronage was a misfortune," he was in high public favour, and young Sheridan again tried his hand in a political letter on the side of the man whom he was violently to assail years afterwards for the American war. The epistle (dated 1770) answers one, "Novus," whom Moore has assumed to be a writer of that name in *Woodfall's Public Advertiser*. Moore however must have mistaken the name of the journal as he had already done in a previous instance, for research shows that no writer of that name appears in that newspaper during 1770 or even 1771.[2] The lad's "Letter" deals scornfully with the stock imputations against the minister of despotic

[1] Sheridan MSS., and cf. Moore, Vol. I., pp. 125—128, and (for a portion) Rae, Vol. I., p. 348.

[2] In 1775 "Novus" *was* busy in the *Public Advertiser* trouncing the American war in terms which Sheridan would then heartily have endorsed.

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government. He attacks "Novus" as pretentious and he criticises a style, "elaborately wrong," and gloomily serious. The pamphleteer had blamed "the arbitrary projects of a Stuart's *nature*." Sheridan inquires what this expression could mean:—"Nature may instigate and encourage, but I believe you are the first that ever made her a projector." There is more in the fragments of this letter than biographers have noticed. Sheridan gives a short historical disquisition on the Stuart reigns, from which one telling sentence may be quoted. "Novus" (whom he calls one of "our newspaper graduates") had spoken of "the Divinity of Adulation." "In your sense," observes the young censor, "it is the god of flattery. As I know of no god at present presiding over that department, you may make charity one."[1] This is quite in the style of the future orator and playwright. Sheridan was beginning to feel his feet.

The muse was dearer to him than political philosophies. He laboured at criticism, but his instinct was for song. Bath was to call forth both his love and his lyrics, and to Bath we must now follow him once more.

[1] Sheridan MSS.

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CHAPTER III

VERSE AND PROSE

(August, 1770—December, 1771)

"Young heads are giddy and young hearts are warm."—COWPER.

"How comes it to pass that you are ever in appearance indolent without being really so, I cannot conjecture," wrote Pomposity-Ker to Dick Idleton in one of his many letters concerning the youth's poetical projects.[1] It was Sheridan's habit to slip into distinction. Parr had noted his stealthy steps in scholarship at Harrow; we shall note them again in his courtship; and it proved the same with his first essays in literature. Oddly enough, at this very time one of the queries addressed to his friend Halhed concerns the source of the classical quotation, "movens sed nihil promovens," "moving, but not shoving." While Sheridan, dissipating the moment, sunned himself in the smiles of Lady Margaret Fordyce,[2] and lounged, a penniless beau in provincial assemblies, while his horizon seemed quite unsettled, he yet brooded in the Bath household over schemes for fame and fortune. At Harrow

[1] Ker to Sheridan, June 25, 1771. Sheridan MSS.

[2] Sister of Lady Anne Lindsay, the authoress of "Auld Robin Gray." A miniature portrait of her by Gainsborough is at the South Kensington Museum. They were a family of beauties. When old Sheridan and his younger daughter Betsy were at Tunbridge Wells in the summer of 1788, she came across Lady Anne "so be-devilled by dress, I should not have known her—a thick muslin roundeau cap" covering the hair, a "Gypsey" hat of black and white chip circles, a black and white spotted petticoat, and over it a "black cloth great coat and a thick muslin neckerchief." Shortly afterwards she describes Lady Margaret as "by much the most beautiful woman in the room" at a ball where Warren Hastings and his wife were prominent. She also met another of the Lindsays, "Lady Elizabeth York," of whom she writes to her sister Alicia LeFanu that "she is reckoned a beauty, but I think her very much inferior to Lady Margaret Fordyce." LeFanu MSS., Elizabeth Sheridan's Letter-Journal. Elliot, too, notices Lady Anne about the same time as faded but still fascinating.

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RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

(from an early drawing in chalk and water colour, in the possession of the Author).

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he had shown marked literary power. The muses of love and satire beckoned to him from Parnassus, and to the last he persisted in declaring that they, not politics, were his true vocation.

What manner of poet would young Sheridan have proved if he had courted those muses only? We may safely say that in his lyrics he would have been a larger Thomas Moore. Moore imitated Sheridan's lilt and *timbre*. He struck the same miniature lyre, though in his hands it could be more pathetic than in Sheridan's. But Sheridan had what Moore had not—a touch of the Restoration ring. Moore, for all his hatred of the prince who gave him preferment, was in essence a Regency troubadour. Despite the sweetness of "Tara's Halls" and of that lovely "She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps," which breathes the wail of forsaken Ireland, "Tommy Little" he abides.

Sheridan's minstrelsy, though it never brings tears to the eyes, ranks higher on the whole than most of Moore's. His muse was really Anacreontic. His love songs are fanciful and tuneful; his epigrams, polished and pungent; his prologues and epilogues, elegant and pithy. None could better turn a compliment or trounce a foible, as his charming rhapsody on Mrs. Crewe bears witness. He discarded the prevalent starch and powder, while his few sustained satires founded on Swift or Pope, but imbued with individual fire, are not without a spark of the modern Byron. Nor in the poorest and least tasteful of these—"The Ridotto"—is Sheridan the less a modern in following that ambling pace of conversational banter which Anstey had set at Bath, and Moore was to resume in London.

Sheridan came fresh from Horace, Theocritus, and Anacreon; he had dabbled in Lucian's sardonic prose. He loved Dryden, whom his father so often declaimed; above all, he was steeped in those seventeenth century love songs which Ben Jonson heralded with his "Drink to me only," itself, like some of Sheridan's, an inlay of half-memories transformed to life by a singer born. All Sheridan's songs are eminently singable. And in this quality, so often absent from loftier strains, he

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resembles the Gilbert of to-day, who, as the late Sir Arthur Sullivan once assured the writer, never wrote an unsingable word, whereas Tennyson, he said, was with difficulty put to music. The higher classical voices which Sheridan had heard from boyhood were beyond his ken, nor could he ever have echoed them. He was the wit and sentimentalist as minstrel. He stood on a lower plane than most of the Cavalier lyricists, but none the less on a plane distinguished of its kind. And he moved there with rambling footsteps. As was well sung of him after his death:—

> "In careless mood he sought the Muses' bower,
> His lyre like that by great Pelides strung;
> The softening solace of a vacant hour
> Its airy descant indolently rung."[1]

More than eighty years earlier Swift had so hailed Sheridan's grandfather in Latin verses:—

> "Sweet friend, the Muses' playmate and their pride,
> Say, Sheridan, which mood shall find thee fain,
> The mimic mirth while Laughter holds his side,
> The scattered salt of wit with puns in train,
> (Those twice-armed myrmidons), or airy fire,
> And sportive dalliance with the poet's lyre."[2]

The quality of his best love lyrics has hardly been appreciated, nor have they been related to the events which gave them birth and actuality. His fame rests on other achievements, and yet—

> "The swords of Calgary, they are less than rust,
> Song passeth not away."

His next two years of wooing were to inspire the sweetest, and here the most popular of them may be anticipated, one which

[1] "Monody on R. B. Sheridan," by Thomas Gent, 1821.

[2] "Deliciae Sheridan musarum, dulcis amice!
. . . . . seu te nimium convivia rident,
Aequivocosque sales spargis, seu ludere versus
Malles, dic Sheridan."
This too forms the motto of a Tory satire, the "All the Talents Garland" (1807).

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sprang from the romance of his second duel for Miss Linley, and was answered by her in verses which will be new to most. Her alarm at his serious wounds prompted Sheridan's poem: it sets itself to music by the rise and fall of its melody. And it is strange that so dry a writer as Hume obviously suggested one of its fancies, while the sound of its refrain was due to a line by Halhed, that must have been shown to the fair songstress herself.[1] It is a lyric instinct with grace and passion.

"Dry be that tear, my gentlest love,
Be hushed that struggling sigh,
Nor seasons, days, nor fate shall prove
More fixed, more true than I.
Hushed be that sigh, be dry that tear,
Cease boding doubt, cease anxious fear,
Dry be that tear.

Ask'st thou how long my love will stay,
When all that's new is past?
How long, ah Delia, can I say
How long my life will last?[2]
Dry be that tear, be hushed that sigh,
At least I'll love thee till I die!
Hushed be that sigh.

[1] Halhed to R. B. Sheridan. "OXFORD, I believe ye 16th April," [1771]. Sheridan MSS.

"A Dwarf Elegy on a Lady of Middle Age."

"Dry be that tear: be hushed that struggling sigh,
Can grief revive whom Heaven ordains to die?"

Halhed's letters contain so many messages and references to Miss Linley, that I am justified in the assumption that she must have seen these. The lines are tame enough: he calls them "merely a *trite jingle* to put the old folks in good humour, and . . . the produce of a restless hour in bed." This *trite jingle* was transmuted by Sheridan into a little masterpiece, and yet this is a pet instance of Sheridan's so-called "plagiarism." Ben Jonson's "Drink to me" was compounded of several antique conceits.

[2] Cf. Hume's Essay "The Epicurean." Hume took it from Montreuil, who probably took it from someone else. "Why so often ask me, '*How long my love shall yet endure.*' Alas! my Cælia, can I resolve this question? *Do I know how long my life shall yet endure?*" Moore has pointed this out, Vol. I., pp. 52, 53. But he has not added that the rest of the passage also suggests some of the remainder of the poem:—"And is the image of our

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And does that thought affect thee too,
The thought of Sylvio's death,
That he who only breathed for you,
Must yield that faithful breath?
Hushed be that sigh, be dry that tear,
Nor let us lose our Heaven here—
Dry be that tear."[1]

The ditty lingered long afterwards, and was not without influence. Even after his second marriage Sheridan introduced a half-echo from it into an elegy composed on his bride's kinsman, an officer killed in action.[2] And not long after his first marriage he introduced it bodily into his "Drama of Devils," which also contains unmistakable allusions to Miss Linley's

frail mortality for ever present to you, to throw a damp on your gayest hours and poison even those joys which love inspires? Consider rather that, if life be frail, we should well employ the present moment, and lose no part of so perishable an existence." In what appears to be Sheridan's first autograph draft for the verses (Add. MS. 29,764, f. 57), the lines in question are actually written in inverted commas, with the variant of "shall" for "will."

"Ask'st thou, how long my love shall stay,
When all that's new shall [*sic*] past?"

A slightly different version was published during Sheridan's lifetime in a rare undated collection of amatory verse "The Festival of Love," which must have appeared before 1806, the date of Sheridan's privy councillorship, since it mentions "R. B. S———, Esqre.," as a contributor. It also contains his verses, "The Kiss," which the writer found in his handwriting among the Sheridan MSS. The opening of "Dry be that tear" here stands "Dried," and in lieu of "Ask'st thou, how long my love will stay," is "Dost ask how long my *vows* shall stay," while in the last stanza "breathe" replaces "breathed." A similar collection of 1827 repeats this version.

[1] Sheridan MSS. The real version of the poem, cited by Moore, Vol. I., p. 51, and confirmed by the copy in William Linley's handwriting, in which, however, "Sylvio's" stands "Silvio's." In the earliest MS. draft, above referred to, the name is, 'Damon," not "Sylvio."

[2] Sheridan MSS. "On the death of a British officer mortally wounded on January 8, 1795, in an action with the French on the banks of the Waal."

"Scarce hushed the sigh, scarce dried the lingering tear," etc.

This is printed in "Clio's Protest" (1819) as "Verses addressed to Laura," and there the first line is shortened by omitting "lingering."

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already-quoted "Eliza's Choice." She, indeed, was to be Reginilla, its heroine, and thus she replied now to "Dry be that Tear":—

"Think'st thou, my Damon, I'd forego
This tender luxury of woe,
Which better than the tongue imparts
The feelings of impassioned hearts;
Blest if my sighs and tears but prove
The winds and waves that waft to love.

Can true affection cease to fear?
Poor is the joy not worth a tear!
Did passion ever know content?
How weak the rapture words can paint!
Then let my sighs and tears but prove
The winds and waves that waft to love.

The Cyprian bird with plaintive moan
Thus makes her faithful passion known;
So Zephyrus breathes on Flora's bowers,
And charms with sigh the queen of flowers!
Then let my sighs and tears but prove
The winds and waves that waft to love."[1]

About the same period too she also "answered" Dr. Percy's lay "O Nancy, wilt thou go with me?" (one of her favourite songs); and since these unnoticed verses strike the personal note of her love for Sheridan when he lay wounded for her sake in July, 1772, they also may fitly be quoted in advance. They find an echo in one of her letters to her lover after he had eloped with her.[2] The "Henry" in them is, of course, a *nom de poésie* following Prior's "Henry and Emma."

"O Henry, didst thou know the heart
That heaves for thee the constant sigh,
Thou wouldst not ask if aught could part
So tender yet so firm a tie.
With thee a cot would prove a court
The russet lawn a garden rare,
Well pleased I'd quit the gay resort
That hailed me fairest of the fair.

[1] "Delia to Damon," printed in the "Annual Register" for 1788 as her answer to those "Stanzas by R. B. Sheridan, Esqre.," which there begin at the second verse.

[2] "Let me see what have I more to say? Nothing but the same dull

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O Henry, lead the toilsome way
  And Love will bear me through the wild,
I well could face the parching ray,
  Nor heed the blast if Henry smiled.
But haply should the raging storm
  Or blaze of noon that face impair,
I'd weep shouldst thou regret the form
  That once was fairest of the fair.

Can perils then my purpose move
  Or fright me from my Henry's breast,
For fear itself gives force to love
  And robs the absent mind of rest.
Should Henry suffer while his bride
  Nor eased the pain, nor soothed his care,
I'd curse these scenes of courtly pride
  That held me fairest of the fair.

But should not all my trembling toil
  Thy precious life avail to save,
I could not on thy sorrows smile,
  I could not strew with flowers thy grave.
I'd lay me by thy clay-cold side
  Where grief would soon my heart-strings tear,
Yet happier that with thee I died
  Than bloomed the fairest of the fair." [1]

At Harrow we have watched young Sheridan collaborating with Halhed in translations from Theocritus—the idyll, wrote Nat, about "Ægeanax, and those small bucks." [2] At Bath Dick had already embarked on some "anacreontics" of his own, "lively," says Moore, "but boyish and extravagant." The biographer has given one—a bacchanalian quatrain.

story over and over again—that I love you to distraction, and that I would prefer you and beggary before any other man with a throne." Immediately afterwards she says "I will call you Horatio—that was the name you gave yourself in that sweet poem," which shows that the letter was written after the receipt of Sheridan's famous verses to her, "Uncouth is this moss-covered grotto of stone," which will be given in their place as our narrative progresses.

[1] Sheridan MSS. In the handwriting of her brother William.

[2] "I should think too that the old things we did at Harrow out of Theocritus concerning Ægeanax and those small bucks, might be pruned up [*sic*] a little and cut a figure." Nathaniel Halhed to Sheridan. [August, 1770].

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"Were mine a goblet that had room
For a whole vintage in its womb,
I still would have the liquor swim
An inch or so above the brim." [1]

But he omits a more interesting specimen that is entitled an "anacreontic" among the Sheridan papers. It is none other than the earliest form of "I ne'er could any lustre see," the celebrated song in "The Duenna" which in collections of poetry is called "Love for Love." Its germ (and this has escaped the critics) is probably to be found in a half recollection of Mrs. Millamant's song in Congreve's "Way of the World."[2]

"I ne'er could any lustre see
In eyes that would not look on me.
I ne'er saw nectar on a lip
But where my own did hope to sip.
Has the maid who seeks my heart
Cheeks of rose untouched by art?
I will own the colour true
When yielding blushes aid their hue.
Is her hand so soft and pure?
I must press it to be sure:
Nor can I be certain then
Till it grateful press again.
Must I with attentive eye
Watch her heaving bosom sigh?
I will do so—when I see
That heaving bosom sigh for me."

So runs the epicurean lay in the printed book which accompanied the operetta.[3] But this crayon for it is headed by three lines which distinctly recall the songs of the Cavaliers.

"True, she is fair—I grant you that.
I wonder not you cannot move her,
Then how the devil can you love her?"

[1] Moore, Vol. I., p. 340. Another may be the MS. fragment mentioned later on.

[2] Act III. s. 15:—

"If there's delight in love 'tis when I see
That heart which others bleed for, bleed for me."

[3] "Songs, Duets, Trios, &c., in the Duenna; or the Double Elopement. As performed at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, written by Richard

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The middle portion, too, originally stood in a shape pointing jealously to Miss Linley—as do all the verses connected with his courtship.

"Is her hand so white and pure?
I must grasp it to be sure.
Must I praise her *melody?*
Let her *sing* of Love and me.
If she choose another theme
I'd rather hear a peacock scream."

And after these occur fresh lines eventually discarded.

"But by the joys that I have known,
And by the kiss I love to own,
I ne'er will pray with [humble] speech
To the Heaven I cannot reach." [1]

On the same paper, moreover, are scrawled several jottings in rhythm designed to be worked up afterwards into rhyme, in accordance with his constant practice and his father's hard-and-fast doctrines regarding the true form of metre; as thus:

"Love is my religion,
Religion of the heart." [2]

Brinsley Sheridan, Esqre. Printed for J. Wilkie in St. Paul's Churchyard, and T. Evans in the Strand, price sixpence, 1776. Octavo." The writer has also a rare edition in quarto, "price one shilling."

[1] The "humble" is inserted in Moore's handwriting. A line before or after the third is manifestly missing.

[2] Sheridan notes on this paper, "Dodsley's Miscellany," which seems to indicate the date as that of his correspondence with Halhed, for that friend tells him about one of their joint projects ("Hernan's Miscellany"), that the title may "give people a Dodsleian idea." Sheridan MSS. Halhed to Sheridan, December 25, 1770. An example of this habit of preluding verse by prose may be adduced from a much later fragment which begins in verse—

"Of that same tree which gave the box
Now rattling in the hands of Fox,
Perhaps his coffin shall be made—"

and then relapses into irregular prose:—"The lawn thou hast chosen for thy bridal shift—thy shroud may be of the same piece. The flower thou hast bought to feed thy vanity from the same tree thy corpse may be decked . . . Death is life's second childhood; we return to the breast from whence we came, were weaned. . . ." Cf. Moore, Vol. I., p. 339.

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And perhaps the following trifle (also among his papers) belongs to the same series, though it was not printed till about 1800 in a rare collection of amatory verse.[1]

"The Kiss."

"Hurried seal of soft affection,
Tenderest pledge of future bliss,
Dearest tie of soft connection,
Love's first snowdrop, virgin kiss.

Speaking silence, dumb confession,
Passion's birth and infant's play,
Dovelike fondness, chaste concession,
Brightest dawn of happier day."

But "The Budding Rose," already noticed, certainly ranks with the rest by virtue of style and subject as well as of the irregularities at its close which are wholly in Sheridan's early manner.[2]

"I gave my love a budding rose,
My infant passion to disclose,
And looking in her radiant eye
I thought to read my destiny.
She breathed upon it—it became
Mature in form, no more the same
As when with timid tears oppressed
I placed the rosebud on her breast.

Again she breathed in sportive play,
And wafted all the leaves away.
And thus she cried, 'Your vows of love
As passing and as light will prove
As this dispersed and faded flower.
One sigh expanded it to bloom,
Another sigh, and it was gone,
Nor lived one transient fleeting hour.'"

Another instance occurs in manuscript notes for a poem on the scene of a wreck which must be referred to his trip with his wife and Mrs. Tickell to the West of England during 1785, cf. *ante*, p. 95.

[1] "The Festival of Love or a Collection of Cytherean Poems. London. Printed for M. Tomkins." It comprises poems by Burns and Wordsworth.

[2] It should be noted that inside the cover of the copybook in which the first act of "The Duenna" is written, Sheridan has scribbled,

"Roses that incite, and from that charm"

together with

"Go, rose, and die where I would be."

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Moreover, outside these "anacreontics" he had now in hand a series of epigrams which Halhed admired, a rhymed collection of "Crazy Tales" evoked perhaps by that friend's project of "Bags and Tales," and an unascertained "new plan,"[1] which may have been the dissertation on ancient and modern Pastoral Poetry of which he speaks. So much is manifest from Halhed's letters to Sheridan.[2]

From that correspondence, three main literary schemes emerge. They were concurrent, and two of them were pursued more or less in collaboration. The first to claim notice will be "The Love Epistles of Aristaenetus," a paraphrase; the second, a musical extravaganza on the theme of Jupiter and Ixion; the third, "Hernan's Miscellany," a weekly serial in the style of "The Spectator," never published, and for which Sheridan probably drew on a copy of "The Dictionary of Arts and Sciences" which he afterwards presented to the second in his last duel.[3] These three productions are known, but four unknown ones also exist in manuscript. The first three of these are sad pastorals concerning the marred friendship of rival swains, and were probably designed as a sequel to "Aristaenetus," in connection with which they will be discussed. The last is a satirical "Epistle from a Cauliflower to Christopher Anstey, Esqre.," which ridicules natural philosophers in the style of Swift, and an attendant "Apology to Mr. Artichoke," which, under the guise of an essay on the transmutation of vegetables, derides the transmigration of souls. Here Sheridan already

[1] "Whatever your new plan is (of which I have not at present the most distant idea) I shall be glad to coincide in it." Sheridan MSS. Halhed to Sheridan [July, 1771]. For the proposed essay cf. *ibid.*, "Oxford, Thursday" [December, 1770]. "I admire your Epigrams, a collection of them might do great things. Are the Crazy Tales never to quit their confinement?" *Ibid.* No trace of either survives. In 1762, John Hall Stevenson (signing fully in the second edition of 1764) published a verse volume of "Crazy Tales" which was reissued in 1816, and misascribed to Sheridan.

[2] These begin while Halhed was at Christ Church in August, 1770, and end with a promise of renewal at the close of October, 1771, when he was on the eve of starting for India. Sheridan's letters are missing.

[3] Paumier. Cf. Sheridan's letter to his sister Betsy of August 27, 1772, given by Rae, Vol. I., p. 215. The "Miscellany" was to be priced at threepence.

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ranged himself against both infidels and mystics. The skit appears in what looks like an old Harrow notebook. A specimen may interest if only for its spelling.

"In an age where everything is brought to the test of demonstration, I cannot suppose that the *ipse dixit* of a Colliflower will be taken for Law. The Spirit of Scepticism has establish[ed] a standard of weight in Proof by which every Epothesis must be tried like your corn, and what is worse it has [caused] every retailer in argument to by a pair of thin scales, and if not Proof they not only refine the Conclusion but clip it with the Sheers of Ridicule, even though the royal Image of Religion [be] on one side, and the Cross on the other. This Art is of high service to the Northern scale-makers, H . . me, &c., who may be considered as the Vendors of the Balances, but check the spirit of exchange of opinions among the less polite."

This onslaught on Hume was probably inspired by Halhed's Werther-like threats of *felo de se* on reading "Hume's Essay on Suicide."[1] The significance of such first-fruits is more biographical than literary, yet some of them appealed to the hour. The time for such baubles has gone by and is as outworn as the costume of their period. They are now little more than fripperies in the limbo of things forgotten, yet under their fancy dress we may still penetrate to the man.

A glance at Nathaniel Brassey Halhed and his letters of this date to Sheridan will best explain the circumstances under which their joint efforts were pursued.

"The thought of two hundred pounds shared between us are enough [the grammar is Halhed's] to bring the tears into one's eyes." This Halhedian sentence strikes a keynote of their correspondence. The undergraduate divided his time between study, music, dissipation, and love-making. He was in straits, and so presumably, though in a less degree, was Sheridan.[2] Both

[1] ". . . I comfort myself that there is a very pretty leap from the top of the Abbey for decayed gentlemen; and besides, I have lately taken to wearing garters, which I never did until I had guessed what Hume's 'Essay on Suicide' was about." Letter of "Oxford, Thursday" [early December, 1770]. It is difficult to see what essay is meant. In Hume's Essays, as finally issued, no such essay (or even allusion) is to be found.

[2] Linley in a letter of this time to Sheridan says that he cannot conceive he "would so trifle with his time" as to have sat idle and spent "the trifle

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friends wanted to fill empty pockets, though they were too grand not to lament the necessity. Halhed, as he paints himself, struck an ante-Byronic attitude. Debt, riot, despair, blighted passion, and threatened suicide, alternate with classical cruces and nice criticism. Above all, the stripling aimed at oddity, and strongly objected when Sheridan rallied him on being "a polite gentleman."[1] Anyone could be that. Not everyone, like Halhed, could broach a theory of musical puns. He was very young, and his father, a City merchant, disliked the muses. Halhed in his better moments disliked himself. He had higher aspirations. "Actions," he wrote,

> "Actions and those alone can truly date
> The period of our fluctuating fate;
> The test of merit and of Life the test,
> For *they've* lived *longest* who have lived the *best*."

"I am a great fool" (he there concludes) "to expose my weak side to you in this manner, but *hanc veniam petimus* [*que*] *damusque vicissim*." Halhed loved scholarship. He corresponded in Latin with his former school-fellow, the future Sir William Jones, and desires for his approval and his old headmaster's[2] take their turn with less estimable longings. "L.Y.D." he signs himself in one of his letters; "*vous scavez bien mon nom* at Christ Church, Oxford." A lazy young dog, these initials may be guessed to mean, and a sad young dog Halhed remained; but though he deprecated examinations as "cursed college business," he won twenty pounds by the process. Now, we hear of Homer, Athenaeus, Scapula's lexicon, and the "Cydonian Apple"; now, of what a terrible fellow he was with the ladies, and what a knowing one with the men. He gathered a cultivated circle around him; Davison,

of money you have at command" (from an autograph in the Broadley collection).

[1] Halhed had wished at first that "Aristaenetus" should be signed as by "A young gentleman at Oxford."

[2] "But before I let the world know my name" (he writes about signing Aristaenetus) "I should like to sit and reflect how Sumner and the wise few of our acquaintance would talk of our work, and whether they would say we had well employed those hours of study and that time of versatility when the mind is open to every pursuit."

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another old Harrovian—"take him from a Greek book and he is lost"—and Schomberg (son of the physician whom Gainsborough painted) "idle and unthinking," joined this band of wastrel Apollos, of whom Sheridan was chief. To Sheridan's judgment his comrade deferred with humility—the respect which nineteen pays to nineteen. "I must be content," he wrote, "with a consciousness of my own ignorance. Pray *add* [this word will be found significant] and correct whatever you like. . . . I most perfectly confide in your judgment," and he owns his want of "common sense, taste, judgment, nicety, and invention." All these qualities, he found to perfection in his portent of a friend, whose slips however in spelling and punctuality he does not fail to reprove. Eventually Halhed went to India, and when at last he was off to the land of Pagoda-trees, oh that the admirable Crichton would follow his footsteps! "Your abilities cannot fail to distinguish you in a place where wit is of great recommendation and where such qualifications as yours must place you in a most exalted sphere." Sheridan in India, the right hand perchance of Warren Hastings, and a witness for despotism in Westminster Hall! The picture belongs to that dim range of unachieved possibilities which would have made Shakespeare a farmer and Heine a pope.

If dross, then, was one incentive to these literary exertions, love certainly was the other. Elizabeth Linley irradiates the whole atmosphere. Twice or thrice during the year of these letters she had sung at Oxford and taken it by storm.[1] Her very name shed perfume. When it was bruited that she had eloped "to Scotland with a man of £3,000 a year,"[2] general consternation ensued. To the young and chivalrous she shone, a being ensphered and ethereal—a "bright particular star," amid the mists of her profession. Her pathetic voice held all hearers spellbound. Years later, Elizabeth Sheridan told her sister Alicia of the "something angelic," and "that beauty of

[1] It was asserted that Norris, the singer, whom Halhed mentions as her lover, but whom Moore misnames (confusing him with Captain Morris), drank himself to death in despair. Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 174.

[2] Letter of December 18 [1770].

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expression" which lent "such additional charms to our sister's singing"; and again, of that "same peculiar tone that I believe is hardly to be equalled in the world."[1] Jackson, the musician, said the same.[2] Sheridan wrote in a set of verses that now first sees the light:

> "Oh, soul of harmony that knows
> No touch of discord to disclose:
> So well her mind and voice agree
> That every thought is melody."[3]

And the singer, Dibdin, quoted the words of Comus after the song of "Echo" as best expressing the quality of her voice.

> "Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
> Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
> Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
> And with these raptures moves the vocal air
> To testify his hidden residence."

Had Sheridan matriculated at Oxford, as Parr desired, a collision between the two friends would have been inevitable. But Halhed, though enraptured, was not hopelessly smitten with the little "nightingale"[4] till, on the eve of quitting England, he realised that his suit was hopeless. Sheridan has constantly been twitted with stealing a march on his friend, just as he has been denied his due share in that friend's "Aristaenetus." Of these two problems the interest of the first is infinitely the more human, and must be disposed of before we discuss what Halhed himself termed "the stale Greek pastoral prose dressed up in English metre."

Halhed's letters certainly do not bear out the hypothesis of

[1] LeFanu MSS. Betsy Sheridan to Alicia LeFanu, "Wednesday, October 1st" [1788]. The previous one is "Friday" (June 3, 1785). The passage is one contrasting Miss Linley's voice with Madame Mara's performance in Westminster Abbey.

[2] Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 195, and "Early Life of S. Rogers," p. 401. He called her face that of an angel, and said that while singing there was something "unearthly" about her.

[3] Cf. the Appendix to this volume.

[4] Halhed calls her "Lusciniola," a little nightingale. In "The Maid of Bath," though named "Miss Linnet," she is called "La petite rossignol."

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Sheridan's perfidy. His flirtations were varied and simultaneous, and he dwells on them with youthful solemnity. We hear of a certain (or uncertain) "Dessy," considerably his senior, by whom—as boys will be—the undergraduate was enthralled. Even when he first heard Miss Linley sing,[1] he thus describes his feelings: "I dare not examine too nicely whether I am in love with her or no. Were Dessy young enough for me to have serious hopes, I am sure I should not. But I am afraid with her the fire of love must change for the gentle glow of friendship." Later on too, in forwarding his "compliments" to the Diva, then returned to Bath, he again recurs to his "adorable Dessy."[2] But soon afterwards, when the songstress revisited Oxford for the Oratorios,[3] and handed him

[1] The occasion of the Latin simile sent to the future Sir William Jones, which long afterwards suggested a passage in "The Duenna": ". . . I will just describe a line or two. 'Mortuum quendam (for we correspond in Latin) ante Ægyptii Medici quam pollincirent, cerebella de auribus unco quodam hamo solebant extrahere,'" and he then goes into classical ecstasies over Miss Linley: "'O meliitum vocis modulamen! O Nectarea labellorum purpura,'" etc. The "Duenna" echo is in Act I., Sc. III., where Don Jerome speaks of "these amorous orgies that steal the senses in hearing, as they say Egyptian embalmers serve mummies, extracting the brain through the ears." Sheridan expressly puts "they say." And Goldsmith had already used the conceit in his "Citizen of the World."

[2] Letters of November 28 and early December, 1770. He there speaks of a gentleman-commoner, Watt—"the animal is quite tame"—and of Norris, a singer, as both madly in love with Miss Linley.

[3] In April, 1771. She then sang a comic song, the words of which may have been Halhed's, or more probably Sheridan's. It is in the Bodleian. Rae has given it (Vol. I., p. 150):

"Well, sirs, then I'll tell you without any jest
The thing of all things that I hate and detest;
A Coxcomb, a Fop,
A Dainty Milksop,
Who's essenced and dizzened from bottom to top,
A thing full of prate,
Of pride and conceit,
All fashion, no weight,
That shrugs and takes Snuff,
And carries a Muff,
A Minikin, finnikin French powder-puff,
And now, sirs, I fancy I've told you enough."

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a packet of literature from Sheridan, he wrote that he received it "by the fairest hands that ever inspired a harpsichord with sentiments and feelings." She took him by storm. Directly he had heard her rehearse: "I am petrified," he sighs, "my very faculties are annihilated with wonder; my conception could not form such a power of voice, such a melody, such a soft yet so audible a tone. Oh, Dick, . . . with Anacreon" [whom he quotes without accents] "I wished myself hanged for not being able to commit my ideas to paper." But though he is always about to see his literary guide and the "Venus de Baiis," he never goes to Bath. Her image evidently haunts him, yet in the same letter: "Here is a very pretty girl in Oxford . . . who appeared at our music-room last Monday, on whom I have written a little kind of heroico-pastoral poem of fifty lines." And there was further an Anglo-Indian, a cryptic "Mrs. Madras," with others doubtless to flatter the fancy of Don Juan minimus. A fortnight, however, before he started for Calcutta the "Siren" sent him a line of God-speed, and then at last the full force of his devotion is borne in upon him, though he admits that he "perceives it too late." "By Heaven! it has put almost a period to my very functions." He dares not think of her but "as a divinity;" he stands abashed at the very thought. And though, earlier, he has prayed his friend's eloquence in aid of his admiration, he now recognises that Sheridan may, after all, prove the happy man. He entreats his company on his travels, and yet, "perhaps, Dick, the only reason and the only person in the world that could have the least influence in causing my stay, may have an equal power over, and more *participation*" [the italics are his

Anyone who compares the song in "The Duenna, "If a daughter you have," will recognise the same lilt:

"If a daughter you have, she's the plague of your life,
No peace shall you know—though you've buried your wife!
At twenty she mocks at the duty you've taught her—
O! what a plague is an obstinate daughter!
Sighing and whining!
Dying and pining!
O! what a plague is an obstinate daughter!" etc.

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own] "with your destiny. If so, Dick, I envy you more than I can express. . . ." St. Cecilia, however, turned a deaf ear,[1] nor does Sheridan seem to have dreaded him as a rival. Indeed, he actually advised him to visit Bath before his departure, and Halhed, in the last letter of the series, promises to communicate with him from Madeira. If his friend had really robbed him is it conceivable that Halhed could so have acted and written? But as a fact Sheridan as yet was uncertain of his own feelings, nor did Miss Linley fall in love with him till the stirring events of the next year riveted more than her regard. At this time she was suffering and sighing for Mathews, the seductive tormentor whom she discovered to be false, and found that she could never marry. No one can study Halhed's letters and hold Sheridan a supplanter; nor (as will appear) did he forestall his brother Charles, who at this time also ranked among the maid's adorers. What, however, can fairly be urged against him from slight hints in this correspondence, is that he fought shy of the subject and must, once at any rate, have cautioned a friend so susceptible against being over-enchanted.[2] Nor did he wholly acquit himself of another ambiguous matter, which did not relate to Halhed, and will be disclosed as we proceed. Halhed was never estranged, and when he next met Sheridan it was to confer on the India Bill, and to vote both for and against him in the House of Commons.[3]

In the "Love Epistles of Aristaenetus," Halhed widened the field of Sheridan's anacreontics. The original is prose; their paraphrase was in verse. Aristaenetus himself is a more than dubious author. His date, and even his existence are

[1] The "resolutions of St. Cecilia" are mentioned.

[2] "You need not caution me against Miss Linley." Halhed to Sheridan. "OXFORD, November 17" [1770].

[3] Against him, in matters relating to Warren Hastings and (1791) on Sheridan's resolutions on the Finance Committee. (Cf. "Speeches," Vol. II., p. 78.) For him, on November 10, 1795, on the Seditious Meetings Bill, which both opposed. For the earlier meeting in 1783, when Sheridan tried to get Halhed to smooth the way for Fox's bill, cf. "Warren Hastings' Letters to his Wife," p. 314.

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problematical. If he ever flourished, he was a late and second-rate Sophist, who cooked up a dish of spicy erotics out of archaic ingredients. The book's preface gravely informs us that he was quoted by Sambucus, first printed in 1561, and already utilised by the "ingenious Tom Brown," an author, by the way, whom Sheridan was to quote in a great speech against the adversaries of Addington.[1] Despite Halhed's protest of "virginibus puerisque," the morals of Aristaenetus are quite as doubtful as his existence; and what Ralph Sneyd, a wit of the aftermath, wrote about "Lalla Rookh," may be well applied to Moore's Greek anticipator:

"'Lalla Rookh,'
Is a naughty book
By Tommy Moore,
Who has written four,
Each warmer
Than the former."

To judge from some sentences in Halhed's letters and the preface to the volume, Sheridan seems to have refined the original grossness[2]; though even after mitigation free passages abound, especially in the sole "Epistle" which Moore attributes to Sheridan.[3]

What was Sheridan's part in this mediocre production? Moore tried to discriminate between his pieces and Halhed's.

[1] On the Army Establishment in December, 1802. The verses are, "I do not like thee, Dr. Fell." Sheridan there attributes this "parody" to "a fair lady who has privileges to like and dislike"; but originally the version of Martial's "Non amo te, Sabidi," was by Brown.

[2] "I will not answer for modest poems," writes Halhed on August 26, 1770, before sending the manuscript, and in a letter which also mentions a translation from Ausonius. In this letter Halhed speaks of "idleness, drunkenness, and company." In an earlier letter he says he will try something "more shamefaced than the present." The preface, which bears many traces of Sheridan's hand, contains this passage: "Some things there were which it was scarce possible to handle in verse; and they are entirely omitted or paraphrastically imitated. Many passages have been softened as indelicate, some suppressed as indecent."

[3] The twelfth. The metre of this Epistle, it should be noted, is that which (among several metres) recurs oftenest in the "Ode to Scandal," already mentioned, and to be mentioned again.

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Watkins, after flatly denying Sheridan's participation, retracted his denial.[1] Mr. Fraser Rae thought that Halhed's letters warranted no more than Sheridanic polish and alteration. Moore is nearer the truth, so far as I can ascertain it, than Rae. Both the letters, the preface, and the style go to prove that Sheridan added verses and even pieces of his own, besides amending and sometimes changing Halhed's. Sheridan was never proud of this performance. It is related that, years later when taxed with its authorship, he went off without a word, and with the book, which a friend had shown him, in his pocket.

Halhed has already been found urging Sheridan to "add and correct wherever he chose." "For some time," he repeated, "I have had full belief and confidence that every correction of yours would be an *emendation*, and every *addition* a new perfection." Elsewhere he speaks of "your plans, alterations, etc.," and of "my lucubrations, or rather of yours, for I think the praise is most deservedly yours."[2] The preface, which is signed H.S., their joint initials, asserts not only that "many new ideas are associated with the original substance," but that "two or three epistles there are in this collection which shelter themselves under the name of Aristaenetus without any other title to his protection." Moreover, it contains a statement about metre in thorough accordance with Sheridan's own distinct theories, in which Halhed had no share—theories to be illustrated in the next year by some famous lines which give the impression of a new metre simply through a sudden change of accent.[3] "As to the many different measures which are here introduced," runs the passage, "something besides the translator's caprice may be urged in their favour. For by a variation of metre the

[1] Cf. Miss LeFanu's remarks on this change of front in "The Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," p. 257.

[2] Letters of November 17 and 28, 1770, and of April 16, 1771. He also speaks of "*our* book," "*our* labours," and "its *manufacturers*." Writing about the intended second part of Aristaenetus, which was nipped in the bud, Halhed says: "You may send me word which letters you choose to allot to me." For the previous citations, cf. the letter headed "OXFORD, Thursday" [early December, 1770].

[3] From "Clio's Protest." Cf. *post*, p. 309.

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style almost necessarily undergoes an alteration; and in general the particular strain of each epistle suggested the particular measure in which it is written. . . . At present it is hoped that some analogy will be found between the mode of passion in each epistle and the versification by which it is expressed: at the same time that a variety of metres, like a variety of prospects on a road, will conduct the reader with greater satisfaction through the whole stage though it be short." These prefatory sentences are recognisable as Sheridan's, though internal evidence is needless, since Halhed himself all but affirms that his friend composed at least the greater part of the preface.[1] As with the preface so with the motto. Halhed disliked mottoes, but he liked Sheridan's.[2] He had originally suggested Horace's "Graeco fonte cadant parce detorta." Sheridan's own motto, which met with his comrade's approval, comes from the eighth book of Milton's "Paradise Lost":

> ". . . . Love refines
> The thoughts, and heart enlarges; hath its seat
> In reason, and is judicious.

It should be added that a fragment remains in Sheridan's handwriting which may have been designed for Aristaenetus, but was perhaps rejected as too free. It treats of a lover's imaginary joys at the

> "Close of each sad, painful day
> When fancy gives what absence takes away."

[1] "I could wish," wrote Halhed to Sheridan in early December, 1770, "that no egotisms be admitted into the Preface, and should not like to have too many apologies." This shows that Sheridan was writing it. But Halhed had also written a preface: "My preface," he says in a letter which should precede the other; and adds that he will be glad of any "addition" or "elimination." In another he says that "our preface should be terse." The Halhed letters were privately printed by Sheridan's grandson and namesake in August, 1872. but several of them are out of their proper sequence.

[2] Cf. Halhed's letter of December 18, 1770. "Your motto I like much; there is not a particle of affectation in it." Halhed's own motto was suggested in his letter of November 28.

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Sheridan transcribed the whole manuscript—a trouble which he can scarcely have relished—and after countless delays detailed in Ker's tiresome letters, it was eventually published at the close of August by Wilkie, Sheridan's frequent publisher in the future.[1] The work, though on the whole favourably reviewed,[2] was not remunerative; but it reached two small editions, and was attributed to greater authors, even to Dr. Johnson. Halhed went on believing that his university would swell the sale, and to one of these optimistic hopes Sheridan appended the word "quixotic" on the margin.

Halhed, then, sent Sheridan a bald paraphrase; Sheridan added to it, altered, metricised, and reshaped it with a taste inherited from his mother,[3] and under the influence of his father's precepts on prosody. Some minuteness has been requisite to arrive at a definite conclusion, but the analysis may serve to throw sidelights on events and character as well as on the vexed questions which, it may be hoped, it sets at rest.

The contents of the volume need not long detain us: it is its personal interest that will need examination. The very first epistle shows traces of Sheridan's hand:

"Blest with a form of heavenly frame,
Blest with a soul beyond that form,
With more than mortal *ought* to claim,
With all that *can* a mortal warm."

[1] Wilkie had not received the MS. till May, and Halhed complained of Sheridan's delays. Ker deprecated August as "the worst month" for publication. In his letter to Sheridan of August 5 he reports that the last proofs were corrected; and in that of August 29, that Wilkie had "disposed of just seven dozen in the ordinary way (to other booksellers), but very few as yet by retail." Sheridan MSS. The title-page runs:

"The Love Epistles of Aristaenetus,
Translated from the Greek
Into
English metre.
London.
Printed for J. Wilkie, No. 71, St. Paul's Churchyard, 1771."

[2] Not always. One reviewer called it "monkish trash." Why "monkish" it is hard to imagine.

[3] Parr wrote of her: "In clearness of intellect, delicacy of taste, and

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The emphasis alone proclaims it his. And who acquainted with his early style can doubt the following :—

"Her cheek with native crimson glows,
But crimson softened by the rose.
'Twas *Hebe's* self bestowed the hue,
Yet *Health* has added something too;
But if an over-tinge there be,
Impute it to her modesty"?

In this piece too occurs that quick transition of metre which marks Sheridan's earlier efforts:

"Thus may that lovely bloom for ever glow,
Thus may those eyes for ever shine."

Halhed's style is different and formal, as witness this from the third epistle :—

"The fruit nectareous, and the scented bloom
Wafted on Zephyr's wing their rich perfume."

The ninth epistle—"The Slip"—and the thirteenth—"The Sagacious Doctor"—seem also to be mainly Sheridan's.

Take this characteristic piece from the latter:

"Fortune, my friend, I've often thought
Is weak if Art assist her not:
So equally all arts are vain
If Fortune help them not again.
They've little lustre of their own
If separate, and viewed alone;
But when together they unite,
They lend each other mutual light.
—But since all symphony seems long
To those impatient for the song,
And lest my apophthegms should fail,
I'll haste to enter on my tale."[1]

And perhaps these lines refer to Halhed himself:

"'Twas now Charisius fairly proved
He loved her more than he was loved."

Nor is Moore at sea in attributing the last epistle to Sheridan alone. It is quite after his manner, and aptly named "The Rival

purity of heart she was one of the first women I ever knew." Cf. "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," p. 215.

[1] For the metre, cf. the new poem at the end of this volume's Appendix.

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Friends." It seems coloured with personal feeling, and it is full of sorrow for friendship lost by rivalry; but it is not Halhed that Sheridan means—still less Mathews, whom he regrets. Some lines from the third of the new poems shortly to be noticed —pastorals which harp on the selfsame strain, that of jealousy severing fellowship—show that a person there designated as "K——" must be intended. He must have been another of Miss Linley's countless admirers. We have heard of Wilding and old Long, of Watt and Norris: we shall hear afterwards of Sir Thomas Clarges, of another unnamed, and of one "R——." "K——," however, remains a mystery. In the LeFanu letters frequent mentions occur of a Bath family called Kearney, with whom the Sheridans had long consorted. Can "Kearney" be the solution? His name would fit the metre. The lines in question are these:

> "K [earney?] and S [heridan] from earliest youth
> Had trod united in the bonds of truth.
> K [earney?], the elder by three years in birth,
> In knowledge first, but both alike in worth."

"K——," then, is the rival whose lost friendship calls forth Sheridan's laments and self-reproaches.

But before the pastorals, from one of which the above is taken, are presented, Sheridan's authorship of this last epistle of "Aristaenetus" must be further identified. The keynote is his old refrain (that of Coleridge's "Christabel"[1]), while the rhetoric, as well as the theme, are certainly not Halhed's.

* * * *

> "In vain! officious gales; she heeds you not;
> My vows are scorned, and all my gifts forgot;

[1] "Alas! They had been friends in youth,
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny and youth is vain
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain."

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A happier rival must her power defend,
And in that rival I have lost a friend.

* * * *

But sure to thee, dear, charming, fatal maid,
(For me thou'st charmed and me thou hast betrayed)
This last request I need not recommend—
Forget the lover thou, as he the friend.

* * * *

Hushed be the ill-timed storm, for what hast thou,
Poor, outcast wretch, to do with passion now?
I *will* be calm;—'tis Reason's voice commands,
And injured Friendship shakes her recent bands.
I will be *calm*; . . .

* * * *

My life has lost its aim! that fatal fair
Was all its object, all its hope or care,
She was the goal to which my course was bent,
Where every wish, where every thought was sent,
A secret influence darted from her eyes—
Each look attraction! and herself the prize.

* * * *

Adieu, my friend, nor blame this sad adieu
Tho' sorrow guides my pen it blames not you.
Forget me—'tis my pray'r; nor seek to know
The fate of him whose portion must be woe
Till the cold earth outstretched her friendly arms,
And Death convince me that he *can* have charms.
E'en where I write with desert views around,
An emblem of my state has sorrow found.
I saw a little stream full briskly glide
Whilst some near spring renewed its infant tide;
But when a churlish hand disturbed its source
How soon the party rivulet flagged its course!
Awhile it skulked, and murmuring thro' the grass,
Whilst whisp'ring rushes mocked its lazy pace;
Then sunk its head, by the first hillock's side,
And sought the covert earth it once supplied."

With these compare the following lines, out of three rough drafts for long pastorals which belong to a slightly later date, and remain among the Sheridan manuscripts. The likeness of tone in the first, and the immanence of Elizabeth Linley in the second, are evident. They are imperfect, lacunæ occur in

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their halting metre, and the first is interspersed with prose. It, too, turns on a friend lost by rivalry in love, the desire to beseech his pardon, and the despair of obtaining it.

"Friend of my soul, companion of those days
When ignorance was joy and friendship praise,
When all the soul was hushed in social ease
And not a trifle but had power to please;
When led by thee, sweet innocence, we strove
To establish Friendship on instinctive love.

* * * *

Such once we were, but Oh! forever gone
That social bond that made us one.

* * * *

With hated rivalship our Friendship gone
And burst the social bonds that made us one,
Sure, I have cause to rail, for I have lost
Whatever youth or health or joy could boast.
I'm plunged in sorrows that can never cease.
I've lost my Friend and with him lost my peace."

The second concerns the maid:

"Need I describe her charms: she asks thy aid
O Muse, whose eyes have seen the maid.
Just eighteen years with gentlest tread
Had passed light-footed o'er her head.
Her opening charms did like [a] rose [bud] shew!
Preferred before the blow.
Her height—Sheri indeed has call'd her tall,
Yet [undecipherable][1] or Strephon says too small.
But her proportion. Such bewitching grace,
So fair a form, [and] so divine a face—
It was not Dignity, 'twas more than grace.[2]
Of birth obscure, of parents mean,
By Fortune low, by Nature born a queen;[3]
Her forehead fairer than a lambkin's brow,
North Britain's foliage on a bed of snow;[4]

[1] It looks like "Take not off."

[2] This line was used by Sheridan in 1777 in the verses sent to Mrs. Crewe with a copy of "The School for Scandal."

[3] In "The Maid of Bath" Foote makes old Flint (*i.e.*, Mr. Long) say to Miss Linnet, "Your friends are low folks, and your fortune just nothing at all."

[4] It will be seen hereafter that the Linley family sprang from the Yorkshire border.

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Her eyes dark hazel, but they not alone
By native hue or native lustre shone,
The soul within would seem to change the hue
And from within a double lustre grew."

The third, a fragment which dwells on the same theme, opens with an invocation, "Hence, idle forms; hence, vain, deceitful love." It proceeds:—

"A shepherd's tale no weight of style deserves,
To raise in words what in effect is low."

Two shepherds next approach a mountain cottage which

"Was once (O seldom blessed word of *was*!
Source of these tears and all my sorrow's cause,)
Was once the fairest mansion of the grove,
Was once the seat of Friendship, joy, and love."

And then follows the quatrain, already quoted, which suggests who the friend was whose loss Sheridan so bitterly deplores. The whole is old-world and romantic.

Whether K—— and S—— be deemed real or fictitious allusions, there can be little doubt that these new pastorals belong to the same group as the last Love Epistle of Aristaenetus, and establish Sheridan's authorship; while they prove that his constant references to rival friends point to some other than Halhed. Nor, in this connection, should the stanza long afterwards inserted in "The Duenna" be forgotten, for it touches the self same string:

"Sharp is the woe that wounds the jealous mind,
When treachery two fond hearts would rend,
But oh! how keener far the pang to find,
That traitor in our bosom friend."

From Aristaenetus, we pass to the operatic burlesque at first called "Jupiter," afterwards "Ixion," and in no shape profitable to its joint authors. Halhed, in sending his original libretto to Sheridan, perhaps hoped that Linley would set it to music, for about this time several of these classical burlettas

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had appeared, or were appearing.[1] But he aimed at a more ambitious flight. His songs resemble, though at a respectful distance, Hookham Frere's subsequent versions of Aristophanes with a half-dash of our modern Gilbert. The first idea—that of a burlesque called "Jupiter"—was confessedly his, and towards the close of August, 1770, he forwarded the manuscript for his friend's improving touches.[2] The theme of "Jupiter" then soon changed into that of "Ixion." But by the following December Sheridan hit on the happy thought of burlesquing the burlesque; of turning it into a running commentary on the play and its players, in the ironical style of the Duke of Buckingham's "Rehearsal," or Fielding's "Pasquin." And thus eventually it became the germ of "The Critic." Halhed wrote that he approved of his friend's plan, and Sheridan worked at it with a will. He got it submitted to Foote, and afterwards, just before Halhed sailed, to Garrick. The play came to nothing, and is only noticeable as "The Critic's" forerunner.[3]

Halhed's original draft of "Ixion"—signed L. Y. D.—is in the British Museum,[4] and from this Rae excerpted specimens of the songs. For Sheridan's rehearsal-commentary—the final form of the play—he relied merely on Moore's extracts, believing that Sheridan's own manuscript was one of the many that Moore mislaid.[5] This manuscript, however, in Sheridan's early handwriting, still exists in a copy-book at Frampton Court. It throws light on a single point. Both Moore

[1] O'Hara's "Golden Pippin," "Midas" (first produced in 1764), and Bridges's "Dido," which was acted at the Haymarket in 1771. Halhed mentions "The Golden Pippin" as in preparation. It was not produced at Covent Garden till 1773, when it was published. The sixth edition of "Midas" was issued in 1771.

[2] Sheridan MSS., Halhed to Sheridan, August 26, 1770.

[3] Letters (undated, but evidently of December), "Sunday night," and "OXFORD, Thursday." Halhed twice speaks of "*your* plan of a rehearsal," and he wrote that "Jupiter" would do much better "in a farce than a play."

[4] Eg. MS. 25935.

[5] Cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 102 *et seq.*; Moore, Vol. I., p. 17 *et seq.* Moore was in the habit of saving himself trouble by sending some of his material in Sheridan's autograph to the printers; one of these is in the writer's possession.

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and Rae, following him, fancied that a further fragment, in which a Scotch character figures, marked a fresh stage of development in the transference of Sheridan's commentary from the one text to the other. This is not the case, as the *dramatis personæ* shows. "S," whom Rae makes "Sandy," is only the original "Simile" Scotised; while "M," whom Rae calls "Manager," is really another Scotsman, "Macdonald."

Halhed's plot hinged on the story of Ixion and Amphitryon. Juno's waiting maid, "Peggy Nubilis," masquerades as her mistress during Jupiter's escapades on earth. The libertines of "Major" Amphitryon's kitchen, presided over by Mercury, mimic the gallants of the skies till the intrigues of Olympus are intercepted by Jupiter's return. "Sir Richard" Ixion, duped by Peggy (who impersonates Juno), is sentenced to be chained to a knife-grinder's wheel and hurled from heaven. Jupiter stands, the blustering monarch of all he surveys.

> "You dogs, I'm Jupiter imperial,
> King, emperor, and pope ethereal,"

while Mercury is presented as a sharping democrat, and Peggy as a sly soubrette. The duet between them is probably one of Sheridan's insertions:

> "MERC. The sun at Tyburn shall be hung—
> NUB. The man i' the moon grow sick—
> MERC. The stars like bugles shall be strung—
> BOTH. Ere I my sweetheart trick.
> NUB. The ox shall carve the butcher up—
> MERC. The whitebait eat the trout;—
> NUB. And sparrows spawn, and fishes pup,—
> BOTH. Ere we will once fall out."[1]

The rehearsal-characters, on the other hand, are entirely Sheridan's. Years later, "The Critic" was to turn on a "Tragedy rehearsed," "Ixion" turns on a rehearsed comedy, and its chorus of comment foreshadows that of the best farce in our language. "Simile" precedes "Puff"; one, "O'Cul(lin"?) seems the precursor of "Dangle"; "Monopoly," of "Sir Fretful Plagiary," and Macdonald of "Sneer." One of the passages

[1] Act I., Sc. III.

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nearly resembles the sentence in "The Critic" that contains Sheridan's telling limitation of comedy proper. Macdonald asks Simile if the play is not a trifle "grave." "Sir," he answers, "you say true; it *is* a grave comedy. I follow the opinion of Longinus, who says comedy ought always to be sentimental. Sir, I value a sentiment of six lines in my piece no more than a nabob does a rupee. I hate those dirty, paltry equivocations which go by the name of puns and pieces of wit. No, sir, it ever was my opinion that the stage should be a place of rational entertainment; instead of which, I am very sorry to say, most people go there for their diversion. Accordingly, I have formed my Comedy so that it is no laughing, giggling piece of work. He must be a very light man that shall discompose his muscles from the beginning to the end."

Here clearly lurks "The Critic" in embryo. This piece is taken from the "fragment" which Moore and Rae have given; but another, which smacks of "The Rivals," will be new.

"SIM. . . . I took this part of his character from a little *trait* of my own. You must know, gentlemen, that my system of courtship is never to be whining and dangling after a woman for months together. . . . No, damme! my process is only this—a military plan—first a surprise—a summons—an escalade—an assault. Simply this, if I want a favour of a woman, I ask her for it. If she refuses me, I knock her down and take it. And if she don't like that, I drop her acquaintance."[1]

And there is a true Sheridanism in the mouth of Macdonald, who thus parries a criticism on an inappropriate line:

"In short, it might do for any other play as well as this. And why not for this as well as any other?"

To quote much would be dull, for the play at best is an immature trifle, but two more excerpts should be added.

"Monopoly" descants on the practice of "writing plays to scenes," and the hack "Simile" is taxed with his inconsequent "blunders." "Blunder!" he says, as Sheridan might often have said of himself. "To be sure I must; but I always could

[1] In the MS. of "The Duenna" is a song, eventually erased, which is founded on this very whimsy.

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get myself out of them again."[1] By far the most characteristic trace however of Sheridan's humour, is the following:

"O'CUL. The plot begins to thicken.

SIM. Thicken! Aye, 'twill be as thick as the calf of your leg, presently. Well, now for the real original patentee Amphitryon. What ho, Amphitryon!—'tis Simile calls—why, where the devil is he?

(*Enter Servant.*)

MONOP. Tom, where is Amphitryon?

SIM. Zounds, he's not arrested too, is he?

SERV. No, sir, *but there was but one black eye in the house, and he is waiting to get it from Jupiter.*"[2]

Hitherto Sheridan has been found formative or transformative rather than strictly original. He followed and shaped the fancies of his epicurean ally, and indeed throughout his literary career he needed some outside stimulus before his originality of mind and style could expand; without such a spur, his ideas and energies lagged and were dormant. "Hernan's Miscellany," however, was a work entirely his own. Designed as a whimsical vehicle for solid reflection, it fell through for lack of the funds which the publishers demanded.[3] Its title probably arose from

[1] Quoted by Moore and Rae.

[2] Given by Moore and Rae, who, however, by omitting the "but," spoils the passage.

[3] Like "Aristaenetus" and "Ixion," it was under the charge of Ker, who for funds resorted to Sheridan's relations—the Ewarts, wine merchants, in London. The publishers demanded an indemnity and an advance of expenses. Ker wrote to Sheridan on October 30, 1770, that these could be got without recourse to Ewart. He also cautioned him that the price should not be higher than threepence; and even so, if a thousand were sold, the author's profit would only amount to £5. A new paper, *The Tickler*, had recently appeared on these lines. Halhed also heard of another called *The Trifler*, though he says that its success was trifling. He objected to the title of "Miscellany" as a "Dodsleian idea," and preferred "The Reformer." He suggested that "Hernan" should be an old man, "opinionative," "*outré*," and peculiar, "though one of the best men in the world in the main." He tried to enlist young Schomberg in the project, and was, of course, himself eager to contribute; Schomberg, he calls a "new crutch for the Miscellany." He agreed with Ker about the issue-price. In April, 1771, Sheridan seems to have relinquished the scheme, much to his friend's disappointment. Cf.

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a misspelling of the name "Herman"[1]; but the other character of its opening pages also shows Sheridan's fondness for the sort of nomenclature that Dickens loved. "Bob Rudliche," the wooden and wooden-legged friend-in-council of "Fred Hernan" (a bizarre and opinionative reformer), is a name of the same family as "Dick Swiveller"—one of those airy names the sound of which instinctively connotes the sense. Nobody could imagine Swiveller a man of routine, or Rudliche a man of ideas. And it should be noted that, before "Rudliche" was chosen, Hernan's phlegmatic adviser was called "Crabtree"—a name later reserved for the cross-grained scandalmonger in the great comedy. Rae has transcribed what purports to be the whole of the first (and only) number, but he has overlooked two supplementary versions, and he stops short just at the point where Sheridan becomes interesting—a discussion of reasons for the prevalent decay in art and literature.[2]

The features of Hernan, who frequents the Grecian coffee-house, are certainly drawn from Sheridan's uncle, Richard Chamberlaine—the centre of all its eccentric wits. There is an amusing allusion to him in a letter of Halhed's. "But pray be particular," he writes to Sheridan, "about your Hibernian Archimedes grafted upon Æsculapius; tell me where he lives [Halhed is off to town], and how I must accost him. By the by, does he talk broad, my dear Bhoy, and shwear by Shweet Jhesus and Shaint Patrick? Or does he wear a devilish odd wig? For my risible muscles are prone to motion, and I must order my visage accordingly." The "odd wig" is an undoubted allusion

Halhed's letters of April 16, 1771, one undated, but belonging to November, 1770, and two others of December.

[1] Halhed writes in the letter headed "OXFORD, Thursday," but belonging to December: 1770, "Although you had given me a perfect idea of what Mr. Hernan (whom I would rather call Herman) [is to be], yet till I see you," etc.

[2] Among the Sheridan manuscripts, in addition to the perfected draft for the whole, which is penned with exceptional neatness, I unearthed some previous matter which Sheridan must have expunged, as well as a rough draft for the opening. Both these have been overlooked, and Moore only uses the same manuscript as Rae, though with omissions.

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to Uncle Richard.[1] And moreover, in the first draft, which neither Moore nor Rae seems to have seen, Hernan is described as a retired sailor.[2] Richard Chamberlaine had started life as a ship's surgeon, and letters to him in that capacity remain among the Sheridan manuscripts.

The essay opens somewhat in the strain of Sterne, though without the magic of his genius. None the less, it is forcible as the work of an amateur only just turned nineteen:

"*I will sit down and write for the good of the People*—for (said I to myself, pulling off my spectacles and drinking the remainder of my six penn'worth) it cannot be but people must be sick of these same rascally Politics. All last winter nothing but—'God defend me! 'tis tiresome to think of it'—I immediately flung the Pamphlet down on the table and, taking my hat and cain [*sic*], walked out of the coffee-house."[3]

Hernan returns to his lodging to ruminate. The maid has let out his fire. He sends her for pens and paper, but here the finished version omits two additions, quite in Sterne's manner: "I never would keep a man: not but what I could afford it—however, the reason is not material now," and "aye, my fire *was* out indeed, and my maid *did* go abroad sure enough —'Good Heavens!' said I. 'How great events depend upon little circumstances!'" It also omits the keynote of the whole.

[1] This wig is the subject of a joke in an unpublished letter to him from Sheridan's brother Charles during June in this very year. Charles puns on "bagatelle" ("Vive la bagatelle" was Chamberlaine's Swiftian motto) as *bag* and *tail*, because Uncle Richard had written to him: "I am not in a *Cue*, and therefore fit to be put in a *Bag*." Sheridan MSS., Charles Sheridan to Richard Chamberlaine, "BATH, June 6, 1771." In "Hernan" too he is called "an infirm old man."

[2] In this version Hernan communes with himself: "Honest Hernan, said I, did you ever write anything that is anything to be read? Have you not spent a great deal of your life at sea?—Yes," etc. Among the letters to R. Chamberlaine is one about long absenting himself from his ship.

[3] The following is the first draft for this beginning: ". . . Pulling off my spectacles and drinking up the remainder of my whey, it cannot be but that folks must be tired of these same rascally politics." "I'll not think of it," was also improved into "'tis tiresome to think of it."

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Hernan, rummaging in his "Common-place book," finds a memorandum. "Mem. Oct. 20th, 1769.—*Left the Grecian, after having read ——'s poems, with a determined resolution to write a periodical paper in order to reform the vitiated taste of the age; but coming home and finding my fire out, was obliged to defer the execution of my plan to another opportunity.*" An earlier draft leaves him in his chair soliloquising to himself. Then (in the received version) Rudliche enters, lumbering upstairs with his wooden leg, only to throw cold water on his friend's literary plans and perpetual delays. Rudliche soon "takes his leave," and Hernan is left meditating on some numbers of the *Spectator*. Here Moore has supplied several sentences that Rae omits, though even Moore's transcript is incomplete. Their undertone is humorous enough:—

". . . I find they are all written by a society. Now I profess to write all myself, though I acknowledge that, on account of a weakness in my eyes, I have got some under-strappers who are to write the poetry, etc. . . . In order to find out the different merits of these my subalterns, I stipulated with them that they should let me feed them as I would. This they consented to do, and it is surprising to think what different effects diet has on the writers. The same, who having been fed two days upon artichokes produced as pretty a copy of verses as ever I saw; on beef were as dull as ditch-water."[1]

And now Sheridan, like his father, begins to inveigh against the literary decadence of the age. The perfections of the past are proverbial, and in a sort of prelude he pleads for the appointment of a censor worthy of the name, since "Dulness has been more confined by wanting an introduction than by any other cause whatever." This leads him to demand a reform of "the present vitiated Taste" and to contrast it with that of Anne's golden age. "Complaints about the Degeneracy of

[1] Moore, Vol. I., p. 30. In the first draft Sheridan continues to discriminate between his assistants according to their diet. "After all," he found, "abstinence was the grand point." He even tried a system of morning "physic" for essays of importance.

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the times," observes new-fledged Sapience, "have so long been heard that they would pass for idle declamation or misanthropy." "But I will say 'tis not the voice of peevish age that now makes them.[1] Let us not trust to words, but examine and search for proofs. In Queen Anne's reign he will find learning flourish, the polite arts in perfection. The liberty of the Press was a beacon to modest merit and patronage inquiring for desert.[2] The decay of this is not to be attributed to any particular person." Sheridan holds that the King should set the literary and artistic tone. "The first two Georges, though 'excellent in other respects, must be regarded as antidotes to learning'; their reigns were 'blots in the book of literature.' But now we have 'a monarch who seems inclined to encourage spirit.' Yet, even so, improvement is doubtful. There is more 'luxurious idleness than study.' Science is branded as superficial, though Herschel was now beginning. Music pleases more by tricks and surprises than by 'true pathos.' 'In dancing, having lost sight of all grace, all the dancer's aim must be to disturb.' 'The English stand in danger of falling into the extremity of ill-taste of every kind. In painting they neglect the historical [we may be grateful that they did], in poetry they are fond of points. The coffee houses [are] the greatest encouragers to dullness.'" And he ends by remarking that, the liberty of the Press, invaluable as it was, had encouraged the publication of every "blockhead." We do not need Sheridan's confirmation of the Georgian apathy to "Boetry and Bainting," and it is certainly

[1] Was he alluding to his father? Elizabeth Sheridan, writing from Bath, where she stayed with her father in 1786, to Alicia LeFanu about Cowper's poems, says: "My father will not allow me to have Poets or Painters or Musicians at present."

[2] This comes from the complete early draft which Moore used. A rougher version of these sentences may be cited from our new matter: "'Tis not idle declamation or the voice of patronage that complains"—"we have too melancoly [*sic*] proofs to the contrary"—"bare assertions signify nothing, let the fact speak for itself." "Let anyone examine the situation of litterature [*sic*] and the *belles lettres* less than a century ago. In the reign of Q. Anne he will find that true learning flourished, and polite arts all in the heighth [*sic*] of perfection," etc.

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not brilliance that commends this *brouillon* to our notice. But it illustrates two main features in Sheridan's nature. The one is his union of the dramatic cast of mind with the reflective. Hernan and Rudliche stand out in vivid relief, while Sheridan's future speeches, and his notes on State papers, are equally graphic. Yet the reflective undertone in the latter part of "Hernan," is never far absent. The other point which "Hernan" brings into relief is Sheridan's defiant attitude towards authority and convention. Not much later we shall find a more violent instance, and even in his comedies the strain is evident. Youth is always pitted against age. This predisposition it was that prescribed his politics and, for a time, made him a semi-Jacobin.

Two other fragments seem associated with "Hernan." The first, which has never been printed, relates to the lowered dignity of poets:

> "To Poets once was reverence due,
> Their souls were great, their numbers few,
> But now the very term denotes
> [*Next line missing.*]
> To sink the prophet's nobler use
> Is grown a term of [*missing*] abuse."

Sheridan among the prophets; it is an edifying picture! Of the second, three lines are all that is legible. They concern the miseries of a literary drudge.

> "Think ye how dear the sickly meal is bought
> By him who works at verse and trades in thought."

He bemoans the "barter" of "the reversion of his thoughts," and the griping clutches that

> "Forestall the blighted harvest of his brain."

Sheridan's youth was not all gossamer and roses. He was forced to struggle, and he knew the bitterness of despised desert. Like Disraeli, he was proud to the last of being "a gentleman of the Press."

But his calendar of 1771 is more memorable for two rhymed satires: the first and the best, "Clio's Protest," which still

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lives through its charming lines, "Marked you her cheek of rosy hue?" the second, his rattling "Ridotto of Bath" which signalised the opening of the "Upper Rooms" in September.[1] The former, originally published in the *Bath Chronicle*, must be the "new verses," which Halhed praises in a passing allusion.

One, Miles Peter Andrews, the modish young friend of Garrick and of "the wicked" Lord Lyttelton, afterwards long prominent in society, a Drury Lane playwright, and for seventeen years member for Bewdley, had published some doggerel patter about the Bath beauties in Cruttwell's newspaper, under the signature of "Clio."[2] Sheridan entered the lists against him, signing himself "Asmodeo." He invokes him as "Pindar," and the satire produced a polished rejoinder called "Pindar's Answer," which has hitherto passed unnoticed, and is certainly not by Andrews. These three compositions were published together next year in London and at Bath under the name of "The Rival Beauties: a Poetical Contest"; though, hitherto, biographers have relied on the posthumous edition of 1819, which omits the third satire, and assures the reader that the provocative to Sheridan's muse was the work of "a wretched scribbler" called Fitzpatrick.[3] It is possible,

[1] Monday, September 30.

[2] He failed as partner in a gunpowder manufactory at Dartford. For particulars about him, cf. Clayden's "The Early Life of S. Rogers," p. 300, but there are also several allusions to him in memoirs of the early nineteenth century, which display him as a fashionable host in the set of the Prince of Wales. Among his plays are "Belphegor," which was acted at Drury Lane in 1781, "Dissipation," "Summer Amusements," and "Mysteries of the Castle," performed as late as 1795. He died in 1814. It has been said that Fitzpatrick used "Andrews" as a *nom de plume*. The confusion between the two probably arises from the fact that Andrews was writing plays and operettas at the same time as Fox's and Sheridan's theatrical generals—Fitzpatrick and Burgoyne.

[3] The edition published three years after Sheridan's death is "Clio's Protest, or 'The Picture' Varnished; London, Joseph Arnould, 2, Spring Gardens, 1819." It only contains Andrews's and Sheridan's verses. But the true first edition is "The Rival Beauties: a Poetical Contest; London,

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and even likely, that Richard Fitzpatrick, later Fox's close friend and connection, was the author of this third contribution to the tournament of rhyme. "Pindar's Answer" addresses Andrews as "Brentford Myles," and the style is markedly better than that of the miserable stuff which Sheridan assailed.

Readers of Mark Twain will remember the prim bathos of "Mr. Garnham, B.A.," in his unrivalled "translations" from the German. Miles Andrews is a worthy prototype, although he entitled himself "a bard of poetical fame." His first verse somewhat resembles "Mr. Garnham's 'Loreley.'"

"Come, exert yourself, Clio, I pray,
Such a theme sure was never before:
But acquit yourself well of the lay
And I never will pester you more."

Nor is the promise of this platitude belied by the sequel, while the scansion keeps pace with the nonsense.

"When the elegant *Jennings* appears,
What a buz [*z*] through the room do they raise,
Though her beauty's the subject she hears,
Not one scrap of conceit she betrays."

He reviews all in turn with the familiarity of modern advertisement, and among them the Seymours, the head of whose family was to become the husband of Sheridan's granddaughter. Though he dwells on the beauty of the songstress, Miss Waller, Miss Linley hides unnamed in an inimitable quatrain :—

"We can boast of one other beside
Who's a mistress of harmony too;
She's well-tempered and void of all pride,
The whole family's equally so."

Mrs. Mathews is then gently patted on the back,[1] but when

Printed for Mr. Griffin . . . and sold by R. Cruttwell, in St. James' Street, Bath." This contains all the compositions. Its preface, dated Bath, January 26, 1772, and signed "One of a Thousand"; tells the reader that he will be "abundantly compensated for a few yawning minutes" over the first effusion by *The Picture Varnished*, and *Pindar's Answer*.

[1] "She's agreeable, cautious, and kind,
Loves good humour I'm sure to her heart;
And so blessed with an amiable mind,
She can't fail every bliss to impart."

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he approaches Lady Margaret Fordyce and her sister, he fairly surpasses himself:—

> "Remark, too, the dimpling sweet smile
> Lady *Marg'ret's* fair countenance wears;
> And Lady Ann whom so beauteous we style
> As quite free of affected fine airs."

Of the matron, "Drax," he observes in the language of tombstones, "As a wife she's a pattern to all." Miles Andrews is himself a model of unconscious humour.

Indignation makes verses. Sheridan was first in the field with his "Clio's Protest or 'The Picture' Varnished," which he dedicated to the Honourable Lady Margaret Fordyce. Its Horatian motto, cleverly punning on the sound of Drax and Seymour, may thus be paraphrased:

> "Painters and Poets both a licence own,
> Their sceptre dates from one coeval throne.
> Yet not that round their immemorial seat
> The raw-boned with the softer kind should meet;
> Dragon with Fawn, and Ford with Drax be paired,
> Or savage *seas* with smiling *moors* be shared."[1]

The signature, "Asmodeo," needs explanation. It was suggested by Cumberland's Epilogue to Foote's "Maid of Bath," and thus forms one more link in Sheridan's association with the Linleys.[2]

The satire opens almost in the voice of Swift:—

> "Whereas a certain Poetaster,
> Pretending Phœbus was his master,
> Has modestly made up the Trio
> By lugging in the name of Clio,

[1] Varying the "Ars Poetica":

> "... Pictoribus atque Poetis
> Quidlibet audendi semper fuit aequa Potestas;
> Scimus ...
> Sed non ut *placidis* coeant immitia, non ut
> Fordiciae Draxis geminentur, Semore Maura."
> "For though invention is our Poet's trade,
> Here he but copies parts which others play'd.
> For on a ramble late one starry night
> With *Asmodeo*, his familiar sprite," etc.

[2] The play was acted in the preceding June.

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To grace a fine descriptive stricture
Which he is pleased to call the Picture.

"I, in behalf of Muse aforesaid
(By *Phœbus* secund. leg. indorsèd)
Present to all, who choose to have it
Enclosed, the Muse's affidavit."

After a discursive page or so the strain is resumed:

"He first begins, as Poets use,
To pay his devoirs to the Muse;
Then vows, if now she'll mend his pen,
He'll never *pester* her again.
(And no bad argument it was
To bribe her to befriend his cause.)
Ladies, it seems you've *nought* to *fear*,
The Poet will not be *severe*:
The *fear* was—being *prais'd* by you."

Sheridan makes short work of the fulsome flatteries on "Jennings."

"Hark, what a general *buz* is spread,
(Tho' only with a single *z*.)
The nymph unconscious that we raise
This *buzzing buzz* to *buzz* her praise;
Or skilled in consciousness to hide,
Ne'er shews the smallest scrap of pride.
But we still *buzz* her noble size,
Her *pretty hair* and *pretty eyes*,
And *pretty* brows those eyes to suit,
And *pretty*—God knows what to boot
Till echo, charm'd at beauty's reign,
With double *buzz* repeats the strain."

And then, after a spirited interlude, he introduces the graceful anacreontic on Lady Margaret Fordyce, contrasting in soft cadence with its keener context, and still visible in Mrs. Sheridan's fair copyhand among her husband's papers.

"And could you really then discover
In gazing those sweet beauties over
No other charm, no winning grace,
Adorning either mind or face,
But one poor *dimple* to express
The *quintessence of Loveliness*?
—Mark'd you her cheek of rosy hue?
Mark'd you her eye of sparkling blue?

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That eye in liquid circles moving;
That cheek, abashed at man's approving;
The *one*—Love's arrows darting round,
The *other*—blushing for the wound:
Did she not speak—did she not move—
Now *Pallas*—now the Queen of Love."

The change of accent which lends the semblance of a new measure, shows how Sheridan had profited by his own and his father's precepts.

Lady Margaret's sister, the "gentle" Lady Anne Lindsay, is next extolled as one who "disdains the pomp of praise," while "Goody Drax" is hit off in verses which depict the same dull domesticities, that were to drive Lady Teazle into an early marriage. But the sting of Sheridan's anger was reserved for Andrews's slight on Miss Linley, and so hasty was his wrath that he entirely missed his enemy's passing reference to his goddess.

"There's music in the name, 'tis true,
But when that name is sung by you
The verse and theme so disagree,
I cannot think of harmony.
O! should your genius ever rise,
And make you Laureate in the *skies*,
I'd hold my life, in twenty years,
You'd spoil the music of the spheres.
—Nay, should the rapture-breathing Nine
In one celestial concert join
Their sov'reign's power to rehearse,
—Wert thou to furnish them with verse,
By *Jove*, I'd fly the heav'nly throng,
Tho' Phœbus play'd, and *Linley* sung."[1]

Here Sheridan sounds something of the note long afterwards struck by Byron in his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," where, too, he paid his homage to the dramatist[2] in the midst

[1] This last passage precedes the former.

"O Sheridan, if aught can move thy pen,
Let Comedy resume her throne again;
Abjure the mummery of German schools,
Leave new Pizarros to translating fools;
Give, as thy last memorial to thy age
One classic drama, and reform the stage."

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of strictures which, like Sheridan's, are mere refinements on a reviewer's invective.

This conventional severity is manifest in a couplet which Andrews deserved, and which still endures in quotation, although it is usually misquoted.

> "You write with ease to shew your breeding,
> But *easy writing's* vile *hard reading*."[1]

But that Sheridan's irony was good-humoured is shown by the apology which closes a satire of four hundred lines:

> "Hence with your *Muse*, your *Clio* hence,
> And court instead—*Dame* COMMON-SENSE.
> If any think that unprovok'd
> I here have satiriz'd and jok'd,
> I answer them whoe'er they be,
> Begin and deal the same by me.
> We petty Sciolists in verse
> For ever make each other worse;
> By turns this licence take and give,[2]
> —The Muses' known prerogative—
> This once allow'd—'tween you and me,—
> Great *Pindar*, there's no enmity.
> But if my satire seems uncouth,
> As back'd by that foul monster, TRUTH,
> And you (true Bard!) art therefore vex'd;
> —Be quit—and praise me in your next."

Nor should a characteristic passage be omitted, since it at once concerns Sheridan's attitude towards women, celebrates "Puff" before his day, and inserts types that anticipate some of those in "The School for Scandal." By the "Philo" in it, Sheridan, as will be seen, probably meant Andrews, by "Lothario," Lord Lyttelton[3] seems intended, while "Cullin" may have suggested the mysterious "O'Cul" who is a critic in "Ixion."

[1] This distich has become proverbial as "cursed hard reading."

[2] Horace's:

> "Hanc veniam petunusque damusque
> Vicissim."

[3] Moore, who quotes it without specifying its source, supposed it referable to Mathews, cf. Vol. I., p. 64.

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"Henceforward, Satire, guide your pen
But spare the women, lash the men.

* * * * *

Would not mild *Puffo* grace thy song,
And *Raucus* with his fluent tongue?
—So rough and yet so glib a tool,
'Twould silence a whole *boarding-school.*
With skipping *wagtail*, pretty puppet
(Inhuman aunt so soon to drop it!)
And *Lizard* with his supple bones
The lively prince of Cotillions?
Then grinning *Witwould*—tho' no *Teague*—
Who more successful at intrigue?

* * * * *

Nor spare the *flirting cassock'd Rogue*,
Nor ancient *Cullin's* polish'd brogue;
Nor gay *Lothario's* nobler name,
That *Nimrod* to all female fame,
Nor sullen *Philo's* stiff grimace,
Great SELF all gathering on his face:
And then to scare the jovial crew,
Raise wretched *Chillchit* to their view;
With body meagre, wan, and thin,
And heart as narrow as his chin."

And now "Pindar," in his turn, took up the cudgels against both Andrews and Sheridan. He hints that Mrs. Drax is the former's patroness, and asks:

"Did *Drax* in thrifty mood refuse
To feed with beef the hungry muse,
And thought a wight with beer besotted
Full well regaled with *nothing potted.*"

He deprecates Sheridan's ire against the men, scorns his rhyme of "interjections" with "fractions," and thus shatters the gem of the satire:

"As when with fury, stifling pity,
Some hero storms a hostile city,
And, entering o'er the prostrate wall,
Finds one vast ruin cover all;
Nor innocence, nor sex, nor age
Secures them from unfeeling rage;

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Save where with *cheek of rosy hue*,
And azure eye of sparkling blue,
(Pity, it is, there were not two,)
In liquid circle, wet with tears,
Sure symptoms of alarming fears;

* * * * *

These favoured few perhaps escape
The horrors of a general rape;
For so may beauty's power control
The transports of a brutal soul,
Shudd'ring we read the savage story,
Nor envy his inhuman glory."

But the wordy warfare did not end here. Andrews seems to have issued an angry retort, while Sheridan rejoined with a second satire on poetasters addressed, this time, to "Philo."

The fragment of it surviving among his papers is here given for the first time; it plunges at once into its subject.

"His thinking powers thus set in motion
By the day's undigested potion,
He feels a ferment in his brain
That heaves to cast it up again,
Till by his own conception fired,
The Blockhead fancies he's inspired,
Calls all the Muses to come down
With full quart Pots of Helicon,
Then, mounting, cleaves the ambient air—
His Pegasus, an elbow-chair."

And it lashes unoriginality, which it soon illustrates by a trenchant simile:

"Not basking in another's day
Will force from them one inborn ray,
The genial power to Poets given
Must be the native gift of Heav'n.
All else is poor reflection thrown
To prove the colours not their own.
The log that Time and frequent race
Have left to moulder in the place,
Bath'd in the Sun's meridian blaze,
Without its heat imbibes its rays

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And glows when shades of night abound,
The wonder of the insects round.
Poor Log, be ne'er thy state forgotten,
Thy very lustre proves thee rotten.

* * * *

Thus Philo at the watering-places
Is grown the terror of the lasses.
Not goblin to a country maid,
Not ghost beneath the churchyard's shade,
Not Mumbo Jumbo on the coast
Where Africk Princes broil and roast,
. . . half the terrors to the weak.
Then, Philo, throw thy pen aside,
Disclaim that little, paltry pride
That those who never injured you
Shall dread a lash that can't be due.
How is the little scribbling plan
Beneath the Dignity of Man."

"The little scribbling plan," however, was not below the dignity of a London audience, that cheered the contest.

The "Ridotto of Bath: a Panegyric," is a far poorer performance—nothing more than a colloquial and commonplace "Epistle from Timothy Screw, Under-server to Messrs. Kuhf and Fitzwater, to his brother Henry, Waiter at Almack's." "Ridotto" is, of course, the Italian for a mixed entertainment of music and dancing, introduced perhaps by Sir Horace Mann, and applied to those *bals parés*, guinea tickets for which are recorded by his friend Horace Walpole. The trifle seems to have struck home, for it was repeatedly published,[1] and posthumously in the same volume as "Clio's Protest." The waiter, of course, writes as a waiter to a waiter, in orthography like that of Thackeray's "Yellowplush." Ridotto

[1] In the *Bath Chronicle* of October 10, 1771, issued in ballad-form at a penny; reissued in 1773, and again in the first volume of the "New Foundling Hospital for Wit." Cf. "Linley, Sheridan, and Mathews at Bath," by Emanuel Green, F.R.S.L., p. 31. It may be added that "The New Foundling Hospital for Wit" was published in 1784, and advertised (with the express mention of Sheridan as a contributor) in an edition of Burke and Windham's "Motion relative to the Speech from the Throne," of June in that year.

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is called "Red-otter," the Octagon refreshment-room, "Hog-styegon," while the interlarded French follows suit—*Coup d'oiel* and "*coief*." The mob's vulgarity is joked on, the stampede for supper, which Anstey too has satirised—and the unmannerly pushing which next year made Miss Linley faint at a Chester masquerade.[1]

"Well, the doors were unbolted, and in they all rush'd;
They crowded, they jostled, they jockey'd and push'd."

Most of the lines are below the average. They had not undergone that "labour of the file" which Sheridan found requisite, and they are scarcely worth saving from oblivion. A set of his early album-verses better deserves to be rescued. They were published, three years after his death, in the same volume as his "Ode to Scandal," which will be found at the end of this volume. The editor of these stanzas "On Fire," who verifies his volume by a facsimile of Sheridan's signature, asserts them to have been addressed "to the Ladies Eliza and Maria Birmingham, daughters of the late Earl Louth"; but the "Eliza" and "sweet Mary" of this *jeu d'esprit* may well be guessed to have been none other than Eliza and Mary Linley.

"On Fire.

"In poets all my marks you'll see,
Since flash and smoke reveal me.
Suspect me always near Nat. Lee,
E'en Blackmore can't conceal me.

[1] Cf. her letter, cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 194. "Such a scene of confusion and fright I never saw. . . . The crowd was so great at the door that before I could get into the room the fright overcame me, and I fainted in the midst of them. On the return of my senses, I found somebody going to pull me by my legs as you would a dead horse. This roused me, and I gave them a hearty kick." When she got in, "the impudent looks and speeches of the men were too much for me." Elizabeth Sheridan, at Bath with her father in 1786, describes the balls there both in the lower and upper rooms. They seem to have undergone a distinct improvement. Alicia's "old admirer," Lord Nugent, was there, and Lord Buckingham, "but he has no recollection of the good ducks and onions he used to devour in King's Mead Street." LeFanu MSS. The "Ridotto" was a London place of entertainment in 1787, when Sir G. Elliot, Mrs. Crewe, and Lady Palmerston frequented it, cf. Minto, "Life and Letters," Vol. I., p. 157.

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In Milton's page I glow by art,
One flame intense and even.
In Shakespeare's blaze, a sudden start
Like Lightnings flash'd from Heav'n.
In many more as well as they
Through various forms I shift:
I'm gently lambent when I'm *Gay*,
But brightest when I'm *Swift*.
In other forms I oft am seen,
In breasts of young and fair,
And as the Virtues dwell within
You'll always find me there.
I with pure-piercing, brilliant gleam
Can arm Eliza's eye;
With modest soft ethereal beam,
Sweet Mary's I supply."

Sheridan often indulged in these light exercises. Much later he struck off a quatrain that aptly embodies the spirit both of "The School for Scandal" and of the "Ode" which preluded it.

"Believe not each aspersing tongue,
As most weak people do,
But still believe that story wrong
Which ought not to be true."[1]

By the closing verses on "Fire" we return to the Linleys with whom we set out, and Eliza Linley will be the heroine of our next chapter. Sheridan's reveries were broken by events which forced him to do battle, and decided the issues of his life. His adventures of 1772 and 1773 form a drama in four

[1] Thirty-four years onwards he wrote another set on "Albion," the pet dog of Lady Ann Hamilton. They come from an autograph in the Sheridan MSS., dated 1806:

"My name is *Albion*—lady dear,
Accept my service tendered here,
For, know, I've laid my plan
So gentle, kind, and good to be
That in your favour soon you'll see
Thy rival, Lady Anne.
I'll love your friend, I'll bite your foe,
I'll guide your steps where'er you go,
Where'er you choose your seat

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acts which has never yet been wholly presented. At least it will lead the reader along a straight road with few by paths; though there are some pit falls. The sleeper is now awake, the dreamer at last becomes a man of action.

There at your feet I'll rest reclined—
'Twill please the wise and good to find
That *Albion's* at your feet."

Another trifle worth repeating and addressed to the same lady, who was afterwards Marchioness of Abercorn, is here transcribed from the original autograph (forming part of some papers formerly belonging to Lady Bessborough and now in the writer's possession). It must have been dashed off about the same time after a party:

" Pray how did she look, was she pale, was she wan?
She was blooming and red as a cherry—poor Ann!
Did she eat, did she drink? yes, she drank up a can,
And ate very near a whole partridge—poor Ann!
Pray what did she do, why she talk'd to each man,
And flirted with Morpeth and Breanebie [?]—poor 'Ann.'
Pray how was she drest? With a turban and fan,
With ear-rings, with chains and with bracelets—'poor Ann.'
And how went she home? In a good warm sedan,
With a muff and a cloack [*sic*] and a tippet—poor Ann!"

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CHAPTER IV

"COUNT ALMAVIVA"

(THE ELOPEMENT)

(January—May, 1772)

"Appelle moi Lindor. Ne vois-tu pas, à mon deguisement, que je veux être inconnu?"—BEAUMARCHAIS, "*Le Barbier de Seville*," Act I., Sc. II.

"And the way of a man with a maid."—PROVERBS.

EVERYONE remembers Count Almaviva in Beaumarchais's first part of his Figaro trilogy—the deliverer in domino of beauty in distress. Moonlight and serenade flit around him, Rosina beckons from her balcony, Bartolo's dark shadow looms in the background, while Figaro's ironical smile and unabashed resource blend with each phantom of a scene which is the triumph of operatic sentiment. This title-rôle Sheridan was now to fill, and if, like his counterpart in the play, he sometimes lapsed afterwards, at least in these preliminaries to his marriage he seems to have been truly, if theatrically, chivalrous.

At the close of November, 1771, old Sheridan had set off for Dublin, carrying with him his comedy of "Captain O'Blunder,"[1] and the young people at Bath were left to their own devices. Like Sir Peter, he "never denied them his advice." "My dear Richard," he wrote to his son, "How could you be so wrong-headed as to commence cold-bathing at such a season of the year?" He warned both him and his brother against quack doctors, and he promised a lucubration on "English Authors,"

[1] An amusing anecdote of this visit was related to Moore by Thomas Grenville. Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 135. Cf. *ante*, p. 243. Young Sheridan speaks in one of his letters of having mislaid his father's manuscript, so that the old theatrical dictionaries are mistaken in thinking that the play only existed through the memory of its actors.

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Sheridan's elopement with Miss Linley,
from the picture by 'Jerry' Barrett,
in the Brighton Museum.

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doubtless in aid of "Hernan." As for himself, he deplored the decline of the Dublin stage, "two miserable companies opposing and starving each other;" and, though his receipts were good, he still aired his everlasting "scheme," for there were "no less than five persons of rank and fortune now waiting my leisure to become my pupils." He concluded by reproaching the whole family for failing to correspond. Impudence answered Dignity in a letter dutifully dated the last day of a leap-year February: "We have been for some time," it runs, "in hopes of a letter that we might know that you had acquitted us of neglect in writing." He wishes him soon back with the theatre-patent in his pocket. All Bath misses him, and the death of the Princess Dowager has put the town in the "dolefuls." He has met Mr. Windham—the sole new acquaintance that he wants to know, though a Harrow friend has introduced him to Colonel "Lutterel's" brother, who departed protesting amity; "but," comments the independent youth, "the relying on *acquaintances* or *seeking* of friendships is a fault which I think I shall always have prudence to avoid." One tell-tale sentence, however, betrays his real preoccupation. The oratorio season is in train. "*Mr. Linley and his whole family, down to the seven-year-olds, are to support one set at the new rooms*, and a band of singers from London another at the old."[1] This was hardly sheer interest in the oratorios. Old Sheridan did not favour his family's liking for the Linleys. Always grand, he had even deprecated music in his great plan of education: it "often draws persons to mix with such company as they would otherwise avoid."[2]

The home drama, which kept the family stage for more than a year, now opens. Its first act is elopement; the second, duel;

[1] Sheridan MSS., fully cited by Moore in Vol. I., pp. 58–63.

[2] "A Plan of Education" (1769), pp. 90, 91. "Music in its present state I would by no means recommend to any gentleman as an accomplishment, as he cannot possibly derive any benefit from it, but may find very ill consequences by being a performer. So much practice, indeed, upon an easy instrument in acquiring a knowledge of the theory, may not be amiss to such as have a genius for it," etc.

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the third, retreat; the fourth, marriage. Some stock must be taken of the *dramatis personæ* before the curtain rises.

Alicia, or "Lissy" Sheridan, a girl of nineteen (two years younger than Dick and four than Charles), was romantic and ardent. She worshipped her youngest brother, and would willingly, as she has told us, have laid down her life for one between whom and the stern father she repeatedly stood. Next to him in her affections ranked the two Elizabeths: Elizabeth Sheridan, her sister and junior by five years, and Elizabeth Linley, her future sister-in-law, whom she adored. "Betsy" Sheridan, in her turn, was equally fond of Mary, or "Polly" Linley (afterwards Mrs. Tickell), while, of all the family, she was the tenderest towards her father—a solicitude matched by the other Elizabeth's to hers. In the stricken years of his age she sacrificed the flower of her youth to his tyrannical megrims with an unselfishness that verges on heroism. To her eldest sister she was more than usually devoted. Melancholy by temperament, she leaned on her high spirits, and for years maintained a correspondence that embraces every particular of her life. Both Alicia and Elizabeth inherited that comedy-mouth which distinguished their brother.

Sheridan's elder brother, Charles, as we see him both in these and other letters, was a pattern of prudence and precision—suave, grave, amiable, and good-looking, but always a superior person. Unfortunately he constantly broke down when it came to the point. And while Richard's lapses arose from over-promising what he sincerely intended, those of Charles sprang afterwards from not meaning to fulfil the promises which he volunteered. The two brothers resembled those in the parable. The former frequently came when he was least expected, the latter often said, "I come, sir," and went not. Both were plausible, but Sheridan's "sensibility" sprang from emotion; Charles's "sensibility," as their younger sister had abundant reason to rue, was "affected." She herself speaks of him as "Surfaceish"; and it is more than likely that Joseph Surface was a cross between him and Mathews. Charles Sheridan was not all this in these early days; his future prosperity developed his

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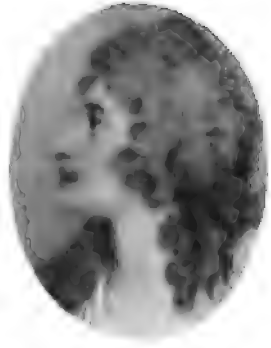
SHERIDAN'S SISTER ALICIA,
from the miniature
(in the possession of J. P. Le Fanu, Esquire),



Mrs. SHERIDAN,
from the miniature by Cosway
(in the possession of Miss Beare).

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worst side. He married a beautiful heiress; through his brother he enjoyed the Irish War Secretaryship for five years and the pickings of the Grenvilles; yet when most affluent he was least generous. He stinted his peevish old father, who was to write of his favourite that he had once exchanged watches with him—"pure gold" for "base metal"—an emblem of how his affection had been requited. He stinted the sister so dependent before marriage that she must have opened a school for bare subsistence had not Richard taken her into his house and pinched himself for her benefit. He stinted his poor old Aunt Chamberlaine in her widowhood, as we know from a pathetic appeal scrawled on a torn playbill. He stinted his uncle and haggled with his brother. As he waxed fat he coddled his health almost as much as his purse, applying his muse—quite a pretty muse—to valetudinarianism, and his graver moments, first to a history of the Swedish revolution which he had witnessed, and afterwards to political tracts.[1] His father, who fell out with all his children, eventually quarrelled with Charles, and this breach with his best beloved rankled deep when that with Richard had been healed.[2]

So much for the Sheridans; the Linleys await a separate chapter. But it should at once be noted that at this time they consisted of Elizabeth, now eighteen; Thomas, the musical genius whom Mozart was soon to pronounce a prodigy, only sixteen, yet in the next year first violin at the Bath concerts; Mary, of the same age as Betsy Sheridan, already a singer and a sketcher, as sprightly and almost as lovely as her sister; Samuel, destined for the Navy, a young Apollo of twelve;

[1] Dr. Johnson much approved of his book on the Swedish Revolution. He published a tract on Irish affairs in 1786, mentioned in his sister Elizabeth's correspondence. In 1793 he published another, "The Roman Catholic Claims to the Elective Franchise discussed," which was reviewed in the "Anthologia Hibernica" for that year, but remained unknown till a Belfast correspondent pointed it out to the late Lord Dufferin in 1897. Cf. Dufferin Papers.

[2] LeFanu MSS. The instances are too numerous to quote, but they are exactly of the nature described. The instance of Aunt Chamberlaine comes from the Sheridan MSS.

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Maria, who was to die singing, a beauty of ten; Ozias, a child of seven; Jane and Charlotte (called "Charles"), twins of five; and William, now a baby of two. Their father, tall and handsome, had an air of command, while Miss Linley, too, could inspire awe.[1] Affectionate though he was, and sensitive, experience had hardened the self-made stoic till he regarded his talented children as so many pet lambs with golden fleeces. He domineered, perhaps all the more from a sense of social inferiority; and in times to come if the Linleys dubbed old Sheridan "Surly-boots," the Sheridans called old Linley "Mar-plot." His wife (Maria) was at once the treasure and the plague of his life. Though she had now been married for over forty years she was still comely, but her clattering tongue and pinching fingers never rested. In her eagerness to save for a rainy day she spared even the candle-ends; yet when emergencies arose she would bring out her hoard, with tears in her eyes, for the benefit of her children. She loved twopenny whist, feeling herself bereaved indeed when she lost, yet she was equally serious in her contrivances for the general good. Though she ruled her strong husband with a brazen voice, she loved and respected him beyond everything on earth. Respectful she was to excess—indeed, incurably vulgar in her deference to rank and wealth. Money was the main object of her match-making; and Foote hit her off well as "Mrs. Linnet," who tells her daughter that in marriage she must first consider an estate, and the husband only as "a kind of mortgage on it."[2] But for all

[1] Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 177. "There was a degree of sternness . . . mixed with the beauty of her features . . . like her father . . ." Mrs. Crouch, who admired the whole family, called him "dark, stern, and gigantic": cf. "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 84. Mrs. Tickell in one of her letters speaks of the frightening way in which that father would sometimes bang the keys of the piano. Sheridan MSS.

[2] These details come from the Sheridan and LeFanu MSS. (Letters of Mrs. Tickell, Mrs. Sheridan, and Miss Elizabeth Sheridan.) Her candle-saving was a by-word; she seized the candles in Elizabeth's Bath bedroom, and in after years her son-in-law, Tickell, returning late as usual to Norfolk Street, where the Linleys then lived in London, had to stumble upstairs in the dark. Foote portrayed her pretentiousness as follows, in the "Maid of Bath": "It's all along of her mother" (says "Button" anent

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their weaknesses the Linley couple preserved something half-idyllic, and long afterwards the Linley daughters used to describe their parents as "Baucis and Philemon."

The villain of the piece still remains to be characterised. Of recent years an attempt has been made—more industrious perhaps than judicious—to whitewash Mathews by evidence mainly based on newspaper tattle (the very chatter against which Sheridan aimed his comedy), and on Watkins, whom none could prefer to Moore.[1] It will be shown that this essay, which despite particularity often stumbles, fails wholly to rehabilitate Mathews. None the less its researches are welcome aids in tracing our Bartolo's antecedents.

The Bath papers of early October, 1770, announced the arrival of a "Mr. and Mrs. Mathews." At Bath (and in Portland Place) they stayed over two winter seasons till his duels with Sheridan in the spring and summer of 1772 hounded Mathews for a space from the city.[2] There they entertained and were entertained, for they were popular with many. Wilkes was among their guests in 1773. At a Dr. Delacour's they were a standing dish, and Foote said of him that Delacour had on his table beef, a saddle of mutton, a couple of chickens, and "Captain" Mathews.

Mathews was born in 1744, seven years before Sheridan. He sprang from an old and well-placed Llandaff family, which had settled in London. His grandfather, Thomas Mathews, a Member of Parliament and Commander of the Mediterranean Fleet, an Elder Brother of Trinity House and

Miss "Linnet's" refusal). "'Cause her great aunt by her father's side was a clargyman's daughter, she is as pragmatic and proud as the Pope, so forsooth, nonething will please her but a bit of quality binding." In later years Sheridan's sister, Elizabeth, noted her vulgarity.

[1] "Linley, Sheridan, and Mathews at Bath, by Emanuel Green. Bath, 1903." Its author makes some mistakes, even when he is most precise, and he is unaware that Miss Sheridan's narrative which he impugns, is that of the elder, and not of the younger, sister, while he fancies that Elizabeth Sheridan was "a lady of nearly seventy," in 1816, when she was only fifty-eight, her sister being five years older.

[2] At Portland Place he died in 1821, and his widow, during the next year.

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an Admiral, died in Sheridan's birth-year at Bloomsbury Square. His father and namesake entered the Army, became a Major, married a Miss Knight of Congresbury, and retired when his son was born. He died in Dean Street, Soho, during June, 1768. The Admiral had betrayed some lack of confidence in his son by leaving him only a partial life interest; but he provided, by a small annuity, for his grandson, the Thomas Mathews of the Sheridan narrative. Thus equipped, Thomas Mathews the youngest received a commission, directly he turned of age, as ensign in the eighty-sixth regiment of foot. Three years later he exchanged into the fifty-fourth, and by 1767 he had withdrawn from his profession without bettering his rank, though he is called "Captain" or "Major" Mathews in the received versions of his encounters with Sheridan. His family owned estates in Ireland as well as in Wales; it is possible that he may have been born there, and he passed in several after-allusions as an Irishman.[1] He married Diana Jones of Fonmon Castle, an heiress of Glamorgan. But the wedding can scarcely have taken place so early as has been thought, for in Foote's realistic[2] "Maid of Bath" (where Mathews figures as Major Racket, and Miss Linley as Miss Linnet) he is throughout treated as a bachelor; and this play which reproduced the Long episode appeared a whole year before any controversy as to facts could arise. Had Mathews been married in the earlier months of 1770, when Long's breach of promise happened, Foote would hardly have kept silence in his satire; nor is it likely that Miss Linley would have written a letter to her elderly suitor avowing her attachment to "another" if that other were no longer single.[3] It is quite

[1] In "Bath Characters" (1807), he is made to speak of Ireland as "my own dear country."

[2] There are many little touches which show how closely it reproduced the episode of Miss Linley and Mr. Long. Her letters of 1772 show that their servant was Hannah, and the maid is called Nancy in the play, which, as Foote tells us, was actually a commission.

[3] This letter was one of the grounds for abandoning the Linley lawsuit against Long: cf. Alicia Sheridan's narrative in the Sheridan MSS.

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likely, therefore, that when Mr. and Mrs. Mathews appeared at Bath in the October of that year, they came fresh from their honeymoon. Moreover, William Linley, when he met Moore nearly fifty years afterwards, was unaware that Mathews was married even at the time of the duel.[1] He was then in the nursery, and might have been told as he grew up that his sister had been once infatuated with a bachelor who, under the guise of friendship, meditated questionable designs. No mention of Mathews's marriage-date occurs in any of the documents, while Gainsborough's portraits—apparently of bride and bridegroom—show him as about twenty-six years of age, and would thus point to 1770 as the year of his wedding.[2]

What manner of man was this bridegroom? Viewed in these pictures Mr. and Mrs. Mathews are a well-favoured pair: he, jaunty and jocund; she, wreathed in the smiles of that good-humour which Andrews praised. A pleasant man of pleasure he certainly was; but there was another and covert side to his character, nor is there need to depart from the family version of the plot. It is not hard to ascertain how Mathews was regarded both before and after his duels with Miss Linley's hero. In "The Maid of Bath," for instance, he starts by speaking of her as "my little flame, *la petite Rossignol*"; while his friend warns him that "*your* little beauty is a bit of a jilt." "Ladies," it is there said, are ever "apt to set their hearts on scarlet," and "the lively little linnet" had long set her heart on Mathews. What was she, however, according to the Scotch go-between, "Lady Catherine," but the servant of the public—"a little play-actor wha' gets applauded and hissed

[1] In 1818. Moore says: "Strange that Linley did not know Mathews was married at the time he was paying court to his sister." Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 174. But Mathews had known and pursued Miss Linley from 1764, three years from any possible date of his marriage, and seven from the period here assumed.

[2] It is true that Alicia's narrative says of Mathews in its latter portion, "Although he had been married many years." In any case, he was not married before 1767, and Alicia was here probably mistaken or misinformed.

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just as the mobility wulls," though, remarks Mathews's crony ("Sir Christopher"), "upon my word she is a sweet little Syren, so innocent." Mathews tries to deliver Andromeda from her Dragon of a dotard by bestowing her on a disguised servant. And even in his conspiracy he enacts Joseph Surface. Sir Christopher suspects his motives, and when Mathews protests, "Upon my soul, . . . you make me blush," he retorts, "Oh! you are devilish modest, I know. I have some reason to believe, Major, you *are* fond of this girl."[1] When, finally, Sir Christopher pins him to a proposal, Miss Linley casts him off as follows:

"Miss Lin.—Sir, there is a little account to be first settled between this gentleman and an old, unhappy acquaintance of mine.
"Sir Chris.—Who?
"Miss Lin.—The Major can guess—the unhappy Miss Prim.
"Sir Chris.—You see, Major, your old sins are rising in judgment.
"Rack.—I believe, Madam, I can satisfy that.
"Miss Lin.—I shan't give you the trouble. . . ."

Racket's line is Joseph to the life, and this is borne out by Cumberland's epilogue:

"The witless Macaroni who purloins
A few cant words which some pert gambler coins."

The prologue was written by Garrick, who, when he met Miss Linley as Mrs. Sheridan, must have remembered how Ensign Mathews had behaved. Almost forty years later Richard Warner, under the pseudonym of "Peter Pallet," brought out his feeble "Bath Characters," where Mathews ("Rattle"), bemoaning his "grey hairs," thus refers to his past, and his encounter with Sheridan:

"No: I must be content to sing, with one of Ossian's heroes, 'Gone is my strength in the war, and fallen my pride amongst women.' There *was* a time, indeed, when I made a figure

[1] This comes towards the close; but earlier Miss Linley, remonstrating with Lady Catherine, sighs: "Major Racket, I once thought—but your ladyship knows his affairs took a different turn."

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with the sex, and could select from my list of conquests a fair specimen of every degree of rank, from the duchess to the spouse of the squire. But—*fuimus*, Jack! All my credit for successful gallantry has been extinguished, and my ardour in the chase been gradually evaporating ever since that very unseasonable *phlebotomical* operation which was performed upon me by Dick Merryman some years ago. A little Linnet, you know, was the subject of our dispute. We went out to settle it; he pinked my doublet as full of holes as a schoolgirl's sampler, and completed my obligations to him by carrying off the bird to his own nest." And that he was quite capable of giving a turn to his case appears from another sentence in the same satire.[1]

Mathews occupied his middle-age with the whist, of which he was an approved arbiter. Moore relates how Hare and Townshend repaired to Bath in those latter days to question him about his second duel with Sheridan, and were assured that it was all "a hoax." "A precious fellow," adds Moore, "this Mathews was."[2]

But there is a concurrence of evidence far more cogent than these general outlines for Mathews's persecution of Miss Linley. Charles Sheridan penned two letters to his Uncle Chamberlaine about a fortnight after his brother's first duel in London. In the first he calls Mathews "the person from whom my brother had taken Miss Linley in a fit of rage and disappointment"; in the second he says that "Dick could scarcely have acted otherwise consistent with humanity."[3] Miss Linley, too, as has been noticed, told Sheridan shortly after his second duel, "Believe me, had you died, I should have certainly dressed myself up as a man and chal[l]enged Mathews. He should have killed me or I would have revenged you and

[1] "Well said, Tom; a story never loses anything by your being the relater of it."

[2] "Journal," Vol. III., p. 233.

[3] Sheridan MSS., cited by Rae, Vol. I., pp. 183, 186. It should be observed that his language tallies with that of Alicia's much later account. "He [Mathews] was outrageous at having been induced by R. B. S. to give over his pursuit of Miss L."

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myself." Again, Sheridan's close friend, William Brereton, informing him on the morning after the elopement of Mathews's frequent and imprecatory visits, adds that "his present situation and feelings are not to be envied," though he owns that, "bad as he is," the town showed him scant charity and made [him] worse perhaps than he deserves."[1] Thomas Grenville, too, who was present at Bath shortly after the second duel, speaks of Mathews to Sheridan in the most opprobrious terms known to the English language.[2] There is no doubt as to his general reputation, and the consequences which it occasioned. Is it to be believed that Sheridan duped his brother, his friends, and Miss Linley as to Mathews's true character and the real grounds for the duels—that he duped all Bath, which rang with the affair—in fine, everybody except Mathews? The supposition is preposterous. Sheridan too, after his second duel, drew up a deliberate account of his first duel for the satisfaction of the Master of the Bath Ceremonies, and in one sentence expressly branded Mathews's nefarious projects. "Mr. T. Mathews," it begins, "thought himself essentially injured by Mr. R. Sheridan's having co-operated in the virtuous efforts of a young lady to escape the snares of vice and dissimulation."[3] If there was no vice and no dissimulation, Wade would surely have interposed when, as happened, old Sheridan procured sworn evidence for the purpose of prosecuting Mathews—a purpose only abandoned from his son's anxiety to spare Miss Linley a fresh ordeal.[4]

[1] Sheridan MSS., cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 172.

[2] Cf. his letter of mid-December, 1772, Sheridan MSS., and cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 243.

[3] Sheridan MSS., cited by Moore, Vol. I., p. 73; Rae, Vol. I., p. 179. It was written on "Tuesday" night at "nine," but refers to the events of the preceding days. He had addressed another note to Wade, the Master of the Ceremonies, on the Saturday. His duel was on the Monday. The *brochure* which necessitates this investigation—Mr. Green's "Linley, Sheridan, and Mathews at Bath," omits the sentence quoted in the text.

[4] At the taking of these affidavits, Alicia Sheridan was present. *Ibid.* Miss Alicia Sheridan's recital forwarded to Sheridan's widow on November 9, 1816.

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And here a point cursorily noticed must be re-emphasised, for it concerns another first-hand source of evidence. The long narrative of these events, forwarded four months after Sheridan's death to his widow, and confirming her brother's statements, was not written by the younger sister, Elizabeth, as has been invariably asserted, but by Alicia, the elder. The mistake is material. Alicia Sheridan, five years older than Elizabeth, would be capable of remembering the broad lines of what happened when she was nineteen even after she had turned sixty-three.[1] She herself took a leading part in these transactions, and though she sometimes trips in minutiæ she would be unlikely to forget the main motives of action. In this regard, therefore, there is no reason to mistrust Alicia's record about Mathews, which runs as follows: ". . . He [Richard Sheridan] . . . entrusted his eldest sister with the real state of his sentiments towards Miss Linley, and informed her of that young lady's being in great distress on account of the persecutions of Major Mathews, who, taking advantage of a degree of countenance which when almost a child she had shown his attentions, now threatened sometimes to destroy himself, at others to injure her character to the utmost of his power, if she persisted in refusing to listen to his addresses." Alicia must surely have recollected facts which fell under her own observation, for at this time she was Miss Linley's dearest friend.

Nor does the matter rest here. The dust of controversy has been raised, and must be swept away before the scene opens. A further account exists which has always been discredited as a posthumous forgery. It purports to be a letter written by Miss Linley to an unknown friend, Miss Saunders, after the return of the elopers from France, and it was first published with some trumpet-flourishes in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for October, 1825. A year later it was incorporated with the partly mythical "Sheridaniana," and in 1859 it again figured

[1] She was born on January 5, 1753. Cf. Elizabeth Sheridan's letter to her on her birthday, LeFanu MSS.

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in the "Octogenarian's" "Sheridan and His Times."[1] It is true that its date (as a facsimile of the manuscript reproduces it) stood as "May 2, 1770," and so conflicted with the facts that the magazine-editor changed it to 1772. It is true, too, that the handwriting is not Miss Linley's. But though it cannot be an original, a minute analysis has convinced me that it is a transcript—however garbled—from a genuine letter. It contains intimate information corroborated by family papers, which up to recent years have remained private. It is independent of Alicia's chronicle, while it supplements Moore's biography by details, some of which accord with sources unseen by the biographer. It details Mathews's repeated menace of suicide, which Alicia states but Moore omits, and which, therefore, no outside fabricator could have known. It confirms Mathews's three years' persecution of Miss Linley under the mask of respect. It mentions Linley's intended lawsuit against Mr. Long, omitted by Moore, but noticed by Alicia in a part of her story as yet unpublished. It presents full particulars of the "Mr. R——" (or "R——t"[2]), whom Miss Linley enumerates as a lover in an after-letter to Sheridan. It speaks of her correspondent as at "D——," and the Yorkshire border of Derby was the Linleys' original home. It even mentions Miss Sheridan's "toothache," of which Dick apprised his father in a letter, part of which has been quoted. It specifies "that fatal Wednesday" as the day of the elopement, and Wednesday, March 18, was actually its date.[3] It states that when they eloped "Sheridan had engaged the wife of one of his servants" as duenna, and that this was done unknown to Miss Linley, who was delighted with such "delicate behaviour." The *General Evening Post* for July 4, 1772, vindicating Sheridan

[1] Our Bath Antiquarian, in alluding to this letter, actually calls it one "professing to be from or by Elizabeth Sheridan (Mrs. H. LeFanu)."

[2] Were it not for this, he might be conjectured to be "Roscoe," whose sister is mentioned as "R" in other letters.

[3] Cf. *London Chronicle* of Tuesday, March 24, 1772, elucidated by Mr. Green in his "Linley, Sheridan, and Mathews at Bath," at p. 35.

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after the second duel, expressly notes that, every night during their absence abroad, he took care that Miss Linley was properly attended, and this is again confirmed by Alicia Sheridan's recital of an affair which she promoted and assisted.[1] On newspaper gossip, perhaps, except for immediate dates, it is safer not to depend; but the heroine herself addressed her lover some months after these transactions in words that echo the spirit of this letter. "No, Sheridan, it was that *delicacy*, that tender compassion, . . . that were the motives which induced me to love you."[2] But there is a much stronger instance of its authenticity—an instance of which Rae, who wrote a paper to invalidate it, was ignorant, and, with him, all those who have branded this letter as spurious. Miss Linley is made to say: "At the age of twelve I was brought up from the country where I had been all my life," this sentence is triumphantly singled out as incredible. Yet it is the truth. Both Elizabeth Linley and her sister, afterwards Mrs. Tickell, were brought up at a boarding-school not far from Wells where an aunt resided, and they only left that school, at a very early age, to perform for their father at Bath. The circumstance finds pathetic mention in one of the new letters from Sheridan to Lady Bessborough and the Duchess of Devonshire—a letter written in the summer of 1792 while his wife lay dying at the Bristol Hot Wells, where her sister had expired five years earlier. "While she slept this evening," he writes, "I rode to a place where I remember she made me drive her when poor Mrs. Tickell was dying here. It is a spot on the side of Brandon Hill, where she and her sister used to play when they were at a boarding-school close by, and I remember how bitterly she cried here and lamented her sister's approaching fate."[3] And the document merits credence on more general grounds. It

[1] "A woman was in the chaise," she says, "who had been hired by Sheridan to accompany them on this extraordinary elopement." Sheridan MSS., and Rae, Vol. I., p. 166.

[2] Cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 255. This comes from a letter written when Miss Linley was for the nonce estranged from her hero.

[3] Cf. App., Vol. II.

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exactly portrays Mrs. Linley and other persons of the drama.[1] Not only are its contents in accordance with known details, but the style and faults of grammar are Miss Linley's own, and while the reasons adduced against the document by no means countervail its internal evidence, they can easily be rebutted.[2] Sheridan's gifted granddaughter, Mrs. Norton, who repudiated it in *Macmillan's Magazine* for January, 1861, had neither the full materials before her nor was she versed in the technicalities.

[1] The mother, it says, referring to the girl's dread of Mathews, "too much attached to interest, laughed at my uneasiness, and told me that novels had turned my head; no man could think seriously of such a child."

[2] The following are the objections raised by Rae as appealing to any sensible reader. (1) Miss Linley "is made to say" "at the age of twelve I was brought from the country where I had been all my life." This has just been dealt with in the text. It may be added that Mrs. Tickell repeatedly stayed afterwards at Wells or its neighbourhood. (2) "She is made to add 'I was led into scenes of dissipation.'" Mr. Rae argues that these words do not fit the Bath, Wells, and Bristol concerts. But we know from her own expressions how deeply she resented the insults to which she was early exposed, and besides, she has told us of "the impudent looks of the men" at a dance in Chester, where she also performed (as well as at Cambridge and Oxford), while she termed the Cambridge undergraduates "a strange set." Moreover, Sheridan, writing in August, 1772, to Thomas Grenville, says even of her performing in the Oratorios at Gloucester, "the theatre and the company are not calculated for her amusement: but how many are there who will think it calculated to promote the most villainous intentions; for so I must call all which tend only to a selfish gratification at the expense of the fair one's happiness" (Cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 231). (3) No reference is elsewhere made to "Miss Saunders," the "confidential friend" to whom the letter is addressed. But various manuscripts confirm many allusions to old friends who make no appearance elsewhere—*e.g.*, Mr. Adam, a Mr. Texier, mentioned by Mrs. Tickell, and the Mr. Wilding who was one of her sister's adorers. The same answer applies to the mention of a Mr. and Mrs. Norton with whom Miss Linley says that she stayed. (4) The letter says that her health was impaired, and that she was sent to drink the waters at the Hot Wells (near Bristol). Why not thus early? Both sisters were delicate, and both died there. (5) "She is made to write that '*Mrs.* Sheridan . . . called by Mathews's desire.'" Richard Brinsley's mother died in 1766. But to the writer's mind this "*Mrs.* Sheridan" is a slip of the transcriber's pen for "Mr. Sheridan," as Richard Brinsley is denominated throughout. His coming by Mathews's desire would be quite natural at this juncture. His father's movements are accurately

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SHERIDAN'S SISTER ELIZABETH,

from the original portrait

(in the possession of J. P. Le Fanu, Esquire).

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It was relied on by Lockhart in the *Quarterly Review* for March, 1826, which reviewed and censured Moore's "Life," and though Moore, in his later edition of 1827, pronounced it to be "a clumsy forgery," his verdict is far from conclusive. Our narrative does not need its support, since it mainly repeats the authentic evidence; but it adds some dramatic touches which heighten the interest. Whether embellished or not, it has been much too lightly dismissed, and it certainly contains material of first impression.

With the early months of 1772 our drama begins. The curtain rises on the following situation. Old Sheridan absent, the young Sheridans and Linleys in close alliance, and Mathews, who for the last two winters had appeared as a married man, importuning the girl whom he had mesmerised from childhood; now tender, now violent, but always hiding sinister plans under an ambush of sympathy. Other lovers abounded, but behind them all lurked his dark shadow, and for dread of him the lawsuit with Mr. Long had been withdrawn. While Elizabeth Linley sang and smiled, she trembled with fears which she could scarcely reveal to parents, who laughed at them as the dreams of a romantic Miss, who trusted the "Captain's" insinuating protests, and were loath to part with so popular and perhaps so profitable an acquaintance.[1] "Mr. R——t," the last suitor, had now receded into the background; Halhed was at Calcutta. Dick Sheridan's growing passion was as yet held secret from one who regarded him only as an agreeable friend. Meanwhile Charles too had caught the pre-

traced in the next paragraph, and there is no mention whatever of the dead mother. (6) The handwriting. But I maintain that this letter is a transcript. (7) The signature. "When married," says Mr. Rae, "she sometimes wrote 'E. L. Sheridan,' but her ordinary signature was 'E. A. S.'" Her usual signature is "E. A. Sheridan," and the writer has never seen one of "E. L. Sheridan." "When single," he says, "she ended her letters either with 'Eliza' or her initials 'E .A. L.'; the signature to this letter is 'E. Linley.'" Even so, it only corresponds to the exceptional married signature.

[1] The "spurious" letter asserts that Mathews had originally been useful to Linley.

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valent fever. In a letter to his uncle, he dwells on the study and lonely rambles of his past summer. He applies to himself Gray's "Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn," while he owns that he enjoys "*têtes-à-têtes* with the nightingales." It is at least a coincidence that some verses redolent of the nightingale remain in Mrs. Sheridan's handwriting. Whether Dick's or Charles's they are addressed to Miss Linley.

"When at the solemn close of parting day
Glimmering and faint, all Nature's glories fade,
Then wakes sweet Philomel her wonted lay,
And fills with fond complaint the lonely shade.

Through the long night her tuneful woe she tells,
Nor fails the wakeful bird with toil oppressed,
For still as her melodious note she swells
The pointed thorn lies rankling in her breast.

Like her, alas! too like, dost thou appear,
Oh! Sweetest Linley—melancholy maid,
For while like hers thy music charms the ear,
Like hers thy tortured bosom seems to bleed.

* * * *

Not Musick's power and beauty's charms avail,
Nor fill with joy sincere the raptur'd breast,
For who but must a Linley's sorrows feel,
Or who that sees her wretched can be blest?"[1]

But though the immaculate Charles was love-stricken, he seems to have wavered between the two sisters; for there exists yet another effusion, and under his name, which is addressed to "Miss *Mary* Linley on her performing the Oratorios."

"When I behold that Hebe's cheek
Where sits a bloom unreached by art,
Those smiles that charm and eyes that speak
Love's selfish language to the Heart,
With such delight I view thy beauties o'er,
Methinks I could not taste a pleasure more.

* * * *

[1] Sheridan MSS., given for the first time.

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"Whose heart then, Mary, is secure
From one possess'd of gifts like thine,
If thus to make the conquest sure
Beauty and Music doth combine,
From powers like these, say *who* can safety find,
Unless 'twere he who is both *deaf* and *blind?*"[1]

Miss Linley as yet regarded both brothers with half-sisterly eyes. Dick, by virtue of his talents and disposition, was her favourite. He brought sunshine into the house, whereas Charles, reserved, sententious, and calculating, realised that his passion was hopeless. Unable to see without sighing for her, he soon took refuge in prudence. He reflected on the risk of his father's displeasure (the words are Alicia's) and his own inability to support a wife. Bidding her farewell in a "formal" letter which his sister Betsy delivered, he accordingly withdrew to a farm-house near Bath, where he stayed till the climax of April recalled him from his hermitage. That he was not really heart-broken and had small cause to reproach his brother, appears from a characteristic sentence in one of the letters addressed to his uncle after that brother's first combat with Mathews: "... I have totally got rid of my very ridiculous attachment ... which had before made me very unhappy and which was the more absurd as I could possibly have no view in it, and that I was at the same time conscious to myself that I was indulging a passion which could only make me acquainted with the pains of love, but never taste its sweets."[2] "Absurd," "conscious to myself," —such words must be interpreted to mean that his native discretion had conquered. Miss Linley was poor, and a performer; old Sheridan, proud and ambitious for his sons. Charles would not hamper his future, and so, unwittingly, he left the course clear for Dick. Not a syllable of love passed Richard's lips, though Miss Linley must soon have guessed the state of his heart from that lyric in which he adjured the Cherub of Heaven." Friendship was now their watchword,

[1] Sheridan MSS., for the first time also.
[2] *Ibid.* (Also cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 186.)

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and of friendship she stood sorely in need. Her open association with Mathews had attracted notice and invited censure.[1] He had long so wound himself about her heart that she felt powerless to repulse him, nor were her eyes yet opened. She still fancied him the victim of a passion as delicate as it was fruitless, and seemed adoring; she pitied him—and pity is akin to love. His endearments practised on her susceptibility while his hints of despair and suicide genuinely alarmed her. In a later phase of his proceedings, after engaging to see her no more, he forced an interview—so runs the "spurious" chronicle—drew out a pistol, and with "horrid imprecations" warned her that unless she would swear to see him on his return from a London visit he would shoot himself before her face. This dastardly menace seems to have been followed by threats to blast her character if she persevered in her refusals.[2] At length Miss Linley began to be undeceived.

She unburdened her heart to Sheridan's sisters, and through them to the brother, who had for some time been one of Mathews's gay companions, and had even, it was bruited, met Miss Linley at his house.[3] Alicia doubted not that Richard was "designed by nature to act the part of a knight of the olden time," nor was it long, as events thickened, before Miss Linley, too, hailed him as her knight-errant. Worn out with

[1] Watkins (Vol. I., p. 174) even went so far as to say that "Mathews had the baseness out of vanity to encourage the spirit of defamation as a compliment paid to his gallantry." Mr. Green (at p. 34), relying on Watkins, actually puts it that Mathews "fanned the notoriety by increasing his courteous attention in proportion as the matter attracted notice." I can find nothing to warrant this in Watkins. Some gossip in the *Craftsman* for October, 1772 (quoted by Mr. Green), says truly that "the censorious were very anxious for virtue without knowing whether it was in danger," and this tallies with Watkins's account, Vol. I., p. 172.

[2] Sheridan MSS. Alicia LeFanu's account. The "spurious" letter adds that he boasted that she was dying of love for him; and this is quite consistent with what Watkins alleges about his "fanning" the defamation.

[3] Watkins, Vol. I., p. 179. There is no known evidence to support this rumour, which Sam Whyte probably conveyed to the author. As to the previous statement, Alicia says that Miss Linley "disclosed her secret griefs" to Elizabeth Sheridan also. They both thought, she writes, that "one so handsome, clever, and bold" was a born knight-errant.

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'CAPTAIN' MATHEWS,

from a photograph

(in the possession of the Dowager Marchioness of Dufferin),

after the portrait by Gainsborough.

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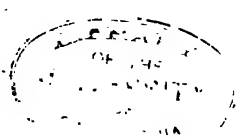

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the strain of the last two years, she longed for repose and seclusion. Publicity had brought her insult;[1] and this maid of eighteen, who had lived through a short lifetime, resolved to retire. Devoted to the father in whose service she was bound, she wished to indemnify him for the loss of her voice by surrendering her share of the fund which had been old Long's compensation.[2] Her mother still blinded herself to the position, although, according to the doubted document, she had already discovered part of Mathews's ill-conduct, but had been pacified by his plausible explanations. The sad facts remained a dead secret, and only at the last moment did old Linley detect his daughter's infatuation, when he promptly remonstrated and tenderly entreated her to see the hypocrite no more. "Anger," she wrote, "I can withstand, but tenderness I never could." She promised, and engaged to impart her promise to the man who had played havoc with her heart; and so intimate had young Sheridan now become with the household, that he was employed as go-between in the affair. The result was an unexpected letter from her tormentor, honouring her wishes and praying for her happiness. Melted by Mathews's behaviour, she half regretted her decision, when suddenly he reappeared on the scene, a maniac brandishing a pistol before her and insisting on a renewal of their friendship. He scared her into compliance, yet she soon trembled between a breach of her plighted word to her father and a breach of it to Mathews. Nor could she disclose her renewed martyrdom to her parents, for she knew that if once Linley learned what had happened, he would at all costs call the wretch to account.[3] Thus beset, the unhappy girl even thought of suicide. It was Sunday, and

[1] Writing to Sheridan this same year, before the second duel, she says: "My father and I had a long conversation this morning. He wanted me to go to a private concert at Dr. Davenport's; but I availed myself of his promise [afterwards extorted] and excused myself, as I am resolved not to go so much to those kind of meetings." Cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 191.

[2] Cf. Alicia's narrative, "Meaning to indemnify her father by giving up a part of the money settled upon her by Long."

[3] Alicia's narrative.

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the family were at church. Wrought into a frenzy, she drew up a will, sat down with a bottle of laudanum on the table, and drank part of its contents. Suddenly Sheridan entered, saw the phial, dissuaded her from pursuing so fell a purpose, and besought her to wait till he should return with tidings that would set her mind at rest. He promised to stop Mathews's pursuit,[1] and he at once fetched Dr. Harrington, who arrived only to find the girl stupefied. Leaving her under his charge, he then hurried off, and returned with a letter to him from Mathews which proved the utter unworthiness of one for whom she was thus ready to sacrifice her life. Mathews had written to say (runs her story) "that I had given him so much trouble that he had the greatest inclination to give me up, but his vanity would not let him do that without gaining his point. He therefore said he was resolved the next time I met him to throw off the mask. . . . He then said he would sufficiently revenge himself for all the trouble I had given him; but if I changed my mind and would not see him, he was resolved to carry me off by force. The moment I read this horrid letter I fainted. . . ."[2] The scales had fallen from her eyes.

The recital (with which Alicia's has been mingled) reads like Richardson's romance; but it is in complete keeping with the characters. Whether credible or not (and to the writer it seems quite credible), its main points cannot be doubted without wantonly discrediting authentic evidence and assigning inadequate motives for the coming elopement. It can scarcely be doubted that Mathews persecuted his prey under an alternate show of despair and devotion, or that Sheridan forced him to desist, or that Miss Linley was miserable. Alicia's after-account expressly states that Mathews "was outrageous at having been induced by 'R. B. S.' to give up

[1] This fact comes not from the "spurious" narrative, but from Alicia's. "R. B. Sheridan sounded Mathews on the subject, and at length prevailed on him to give up the pursuit."

[2] Cf. the long letter itself as given in "Sheridan and his Times, by an Octogenarian," Vol. I., p. 64, and in "Sheridaniana," p. 36.

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his pursuit of Miss L——." Undoubtedly, too, the names of the rake and the beauty were linked together in the scandalous chronicle, and undoubtedly young Sheridan extricated her from what had at length become an *impasse*. She had long been weary, she was now panic-stricken. To stay at Bath seemed impossible. Anger, fear, and remorse agitated her bosom, and swayed her to depend on a sustaining hand for deliverance. To Sheridan she was well inclined, but her passionate love for him came afterwards.[1] With Sheridan's sister they were now both in conference.

The upshot was a scheme worthy of the trio's years, which, united, did not amount to more than fifty-seven. The notion of seeking the temporary shelter of a convent originated with Miss Linley herself.[2] Alicia Sheridan then suggested that some of her friends at St. Quentin, with whom she had stayed on her road back to England, would offer an asylum till the French convent should be found. Sheridan could act as her *preux chevalier*, returning when once she had been safely bestowed; and thus she would at once bring her parents to reason, and escape the terrors of her situation. Sheridan played his preliminary part to perfection. To disarm slander, he arranged an escort in the shape of a waiting-woman, and, thus attended, Miss Linley was to assume the name of "Harley."[3] With these safeguards, the young conspirators concocted a plot that savours of Beaumarchais. On Wednesday, March 18, the father, brother, and sister were to perform at the Bath concerts, and the home would be empty. Miss Linley was to excuse her absence on the plea of illness—a truthful plea, for,

[1] Writing to him during 1773, in a letter already cited, she says: "You are sensible that when I left Bath I had not an idea of you but as a friend. It was not your person that gained my affection. No, Sheridan, it was that delicacy, that tender compassion," etc., "that were the motives which induced me to love you." Cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 255.

[2] Alicia's narrative. Sheridan MSS. Cited Rae, Vol. I., p. 165. "Miss Linley, now completely disgusted with a profession she never liked, conceived the idea of retiring to a convent in France till she came of age."

[3] So, the doubted chronicle.

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always delicate, she still suffered. By nightfall Sheridan was to bring a sedan, which would convey her from their house in the Crescent to the duenna and post-chaise awaiting them on the London Road.[1]

The frequent interviews of the young couple had betrayed the lover's feelings, and doubtless he already hoped that gratitude might call forth more than friendship, that before or after her bestowal in a convent, she would consent to become his wife. Most of the lyrics in "The Duenna" were clearly composed in 1772 and 1773, and it is by no stretch of imagination that "Carlos's Song" must relate either to the eve or the sequel of their romantic errand.

"Had I a heart for falsehood framed,
I ne'er could injure you:
For tho' your tongue no promise claimed,
Your charms would make me true.
To you no soul shall bear deceit,
No stranger offer wrong:
But friends in all the ag'd you'll meet,
And lovers in the young.

"But when they learn that you have blest
Another with your heart,
They'll bid aspiring passion rest,
And act a brother's part.
Then, lady, dread not here deceit,
Nor fear to suffer wrong:
For friends in all the ag'd you'll meet,
And brothers in the young."

Chivalry animates the strain. The really equivocal side of Sheridan's tact in this adventure was that he boldly effected the maid's rescue by sounding the man whom he despised, cultivating his acquaintance, and apparently even exploiting his unguarded moments.[2] This part of his conduct has passed

[1] Alicia's narrative. The other and dubious chronicle details two chairs —one for herself, the other for her luggage; and this seems more likely. It further locates the coach in Walcot Street.

[2] So expressly says the doubted letter, where Miss Linley seems to approve. Alicia's account simply says that Miss Linley thought Sheridan's "intimacy with Mathews might warrant his interference," and that in consequence he "sounded him on the subject."

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unnoticed, while the false scents of alleged baseness to his brother and Halhed have been pursued; that Sheridan thought "all fair in love and war" appears from many lines in several of his early verses.

The awaited evening arrived, and all was anxious expectation. A Mr. Adams, who favoured Dick Sheridan and is mentioned both in his letters and, afterwards, in Mrs. Tickell's, seems to have abetted their preparations,[1] while Sheridan's confederate was William Brereton, who first gave him news of what passed after their flight. Miss Linley, agonised with suspense and the "necessity" of a step which tore her from her home, stood waiting with Alicia Sheridan, who helped her to pack her clothes. At last Sheridan came, and "half-fainting," adds the suspected authority, she was carried in the chair to the post-chaise. And here this narrative interposes a picturesque incident. "Before he could follow the chairs, he met Mathews, who was going to our house, as I had not undeceived him for fear of the consequence. Sheridan framed some excuse, and . . . begged he would go to his sister's and wait there till he sent for him, as he had an affair of honour on his hands, and perhaps should want his assistance. By this means he got rid of him." The reader will judge whether these touches bear the stamp of reality. At least, they recall us to the "Barber of Seville," where Bartolo himself supplies the ladder which serves for his outwitter's elopement. Alicia's narrative simply details the circumstances of the chair, the chaise, and the attendant for "this extraordinary elopement," which well fitted an epoch of "sensibility," though it was certainly a step that neither of them should have taken. And thus the fugitives, boy and girl—strange friend and stranger guardian—set out.

As they whirled along that lovely and winding road, past the Castle Inn, through Savernake forest, on, on, to Newbury, and

[1] "I have writ now to Mr. Adams," writes Sheridan in the letter to his brother from Lille of April 15. He seems to have been at Waltham Abbey, Essex, in the October of the same year, for Sheridan, writing thence, tells his father that he is calling on him. Cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 213.

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thence over the fearsome heath of Hounslow, what recked youth and wonderment of aught but delight and danger? "Horatio," "Sylvio," "Delia," "Julia," by whatever italicised and Italian names eighteenth-century lovers styled themselves, were no calculators of consequences or moralists on the obvious. Still less would they count the sordid cost. Was there not Delia's seventy a year from old Long's money? Would Sylvio's sister spare to sacrifice from her scanty purse? Hope was their postillion, and hope defies bankruptcy, lavishing the guineas of its hour. The very dust, as it circled in the March winds, must have raised a cloud of flattering dreams under the shimmering moon. Day had broken before they reached Maidenhead thicket, and by nine of that spring morning they drove through London.[1] Strong arm and fluttering heart, trustful maid and rescuing knight—what happiness, what havoc can they not achieve? But life is not an escapade; and when Count Almaviva flings off his disguise as Lindor, and winds his cloak around Rosina, those two later plays of "Figaro's Marriage" and "The Culpable Mother" already loom in the distance.

Sheridan at once introduced Miss Linley to his kinsmen, the Ewarts, "as an heiress, who had consented to be united to him in France";[2] and it should be noticed that the pretext represented the desire of his heart. The Ewarts, however, do not seem to have forwarded their scheme, and at nightfall they betook themselves to a fresh acquaintance, who has been variously described as an "old gentleman in Holborn," and "the son of a respectable brandy merchant in the city."[3] "He," says Alicia, "suggested the idea of their sailing from the port of London to Dunkirk, to which place his father had a vessel ready to sail immediately. This plan, as making

[1] According to the letter miscalled apocryphal; Alicia's account says "early the next day." Cited Fraser Rae, Vol. I., p. 166.

[2] Alicia's account, Sheridan MSS., and *ibid.* A year later young Ewart himself eloped with an heiress.

[3] The latter is Alicia's description; the former, Charles Lamb's, who supplies the recollection of the visit being by night.

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a pursuit more difficult, was immediately adopted, and the old gentleman not being entirely let into the secret, accompanied the young couple on board his ship, recommending them to the care of the captain as if they had been his own children."

Now hereby hangs a tale that might well inspire a painter. This gentleman whom Charles Lamb calls "old" was none other than his own godfather, Field, who was requited years afterwards by Sheridan with a free pass to Drury Lane, and thus became the means of admitting the boy-essayist to his first play. Lamb's parents were present "over a quadrille table" when Sheridan and Miss Linley entered. "F.," writes Lamb, "was a tall, grave person, lofty in speech, and had pretensions above his rank. He associated in those days with John Palmer, the comedian, whose gait and bearing he seemed to copy; if John (which is quite as likely) did not rather borrow somewhat of his manner from my godfather." John Palmer, as most will recollect, was to be the first impersonator of "Joseph Surface," and this clandestine visit is thus associated both with "The School for Scandal" and with "Elia."[1]

"He gave them" (resumes Alicia) "letters of introduction to his correspondent at Dunkirk, and they were thence given recommendations to several persons at Lille."[2] The passage proved stormy, and at one moment Sheridan despaired of his heroine's life. Long afterwards,—in the very year of

[1] Cf. "Essays of Elia," "My First Play." Fitzgerald mentions the fact without explaining it in his "Lives of the Sheridans," Vol. I., p. 92, and he mistakes "F." for Ewart. Lamb himself makes a stranger error; he calls Miss Linley "Maria" (who was then a girl of nine), and he says that she eloped from "a boarding-school."

[2] The doubted letter puts it baldly: "From London we went to Dunkirk by sea, where we were recommended to an English family, who treated me very politely." According to a *canard* retailed in the *Morning Post* of September 10, 1787, and reproduced by Fitzgerald in his "Lives of the Sheridans" (Vol. I., p. 92), Sheridan "took a boat," which was driven in by stress of weather to Margate, where Miss Linley and Sheridan were said to have pencilled two dull epigrams—the last blasphemous—on the inn chimney-piece. These (often repeated) are among the Sheridan cuttings in Eg. MS. 1975 at the British Museum.

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her death—he wrote, looking back on the past, that his love for her was such that, had she expired, as once he feared she might, he would "assuredly have plunged with her body to the grave."[1] From Dunkirk they proceeded to Lille, and there, says the questioned chronicle, "Sheridan met an old schoolfellow who immediately introduced us to an English family, with whom he boarded, and recommended us to a convent which we resolved to accept without going further."[2] In that convent, adds Alicia, Miss Linley resolved to remain "either till Sheridan came of age, or till he was in a situation to support a wife."

But *en route* they had stopped at Calais, and this must have been the occasion of a scene which Sheridan used to relate—two French officers eyeing Miss Linley in a theatre, Sheridan glaring at them with arms akimbo, and neither of them able to vary their dumb show by a word of French or English.[3] But it was the occasion also of something more serious. There can be small doubt that in the neighbourhood of Calais they went through some form of marriage. The writer inclines to believe that they were wedded by a Catholic priest. They learned afterwards, or even knew at the time, that the ceremony was not legally binding. Both of them were minors, no parental consent had been or could be given, and nothing is known as to the sort of priest who married them. To such a form all the evidence points. The sole early biographer to suggest the contrary is Watkins, who states that Sheridan, "finding there was an obstacle to their marriage in France, had the prudence to place his mistress in one of the convents which admitted boarders without any objection to their religious sentiments."[4]

[1] Cf. *ante*, p. 74, and *post*, Vol. II., App. IV. (*g*). Letter to Lady Bessborough and her sister, the Duchess of Devonshire.

[2] Alicia writes: "She immediately secured an apartment at a convent."

[3] Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 191. Sheridan told this to Rogers.

[4] Watkins, Vol. I., p. 185 (obsequiously followed by Mr. Green). Let us give the after-evidence that corroborates Alicia's assertion of their marriage, and qualify it by statements that indicate the ceremony to have been invalid. At Lille a friendly Dr. Dolman was called in, and in a letter of

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Watkins, however, is an untrustworthy guide, and it is certain not only that the convent-idea formed part of the original plan, but that by stress of circumstances it eventually failed; it was no result of a thwarted marriage project. That the ceremony was nominal seems also certain, if we admit the evidence of Sheridan's precautions and the constant presence of Miss Linley's chaperone. Some months afterwards, it is true (perhaps when she found out that the rite was invalid), Miss Linley frankly told Sheridan that she "had a soul above the ties that govern vulgar souls"; but in the same and in a previous letter, she longs for a real union.[1] She was far too good a woman, too indignant already at libertine advances, to countenance unblessed worship, however pure in spirit. That Sheridan in no way practised on innocence was acknowledged in a letter from his brother, and is attested by his sister. More

his still remaining (cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 169) he sends "compliments and wishes of health to your *lady*." He evidently took her for his wife. After the second duel Miss Linley unguardedly let drop words in her distraction about her right as a "wife" to nurse him (cf. Alicia's manuscript narrative, cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 201). The newspapers of some months later gave out that they were married, and a press-announcement of the wedding next year runs: "Miss Linley is at last *firmly* united." Writing to Sheridan after the second duel, and speaking of both their fathers, Miss Linley says: "It is strongly reported that we [are married], and that I discovered it in my fright when I first heard of your duel. Then there is a long lecture with hopes that it is not true, and that I will convince the world I have more spirit and prudence, etc., etc." (cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 207). Some time earlier she is vexed with Charles's interference, and thinks he "suspects something" (*ibid.*, p. 190); while in a letter from her to Sheridan, quoted in our next note, she speaks of hopes to be his "*in every sense of the word*." At the close of the year, when the lovers were momentarily estranged and Miss Linley had promised her father to have done with Sheridan, she listened to another proposal of marriage and wrote to Sheridan that she had told him "every circumstance of her story"; so it is clear that whatever the ceremony may have been it proved to be no legal tie.

[1] A letter of September, 1772 (cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 211): "Yet I must look sometimes towards a time when I hope it will be in my dear Horatio's power at least to make me his in every sense of the word." The other letter belongs to the summer of this year: "Miss R. [Roscoe] said she was sure you and I should make a match of it. . . Only think of this, bright Hev'ns" [*sic*]. (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 192.)

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than this, Miss Linley herself, in a passage twice cited, fully recognised that his "delicacy" in this affair and his "interest" in her welfare were the mainsprings of her devotion. None the less it can scarcely be doubted that he pressed her to marry him.[1] What Sheridan wanted was to bind her in some way to himself, to preclude her from being again sacrificed to a loveless suitor. This completely suits his character. His course was not ruled by self-sacrifice, but neither was it prompted by lawless impulse, and it was very human. So was hers. The suffering, as well as the romance, appealed to her, for as Sheridan was afterwards to write in his "Duenna," "in the heart's attachment, a woman never likes a man with ardour, till she has suffered for his sake."

"Miss Linley, who really preferred him greatly to any person," says her chosen confidante, "was not difficult to persuade; and at a village not far from Calais [observe the detail] the marriage ceremony was performed by a priest who was known to be often employed on such occasions."[2] Can it be doubted that a further lyric, from "The Duenna," was evoked by this episode of the elopement:—

Gentle maid, ah! why suspect me?
  Let me serve thee—then reject me;
Canst thou trust and I deceive thee?
  Art thou sad—and shall I grieve thee,
Gentle maid, ah! why suspect me?
  Let me serve thee—then reject me"?

Alicia's intimacy with all their projects is confirmed by a memorial of their gratitude. A French watch with the

[1] After leaving Dunkirk, writes Alicia, Sheridan "was more explicit with Miss Linley as to his views in accompanying her to France. He told her he could not be content to leave her in a convent unless she consented to a previous marriage, which had long been the object of his hopes, and she must be aware that after the step she had taken she could not appear in England but as his wife."

[2] Sheridan MSS., cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 168.

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lovers' hair interwoven, the brother's gift to his sister, still survives among the treasures of Frampton Court.

It has escaped notice that several echoes of the Sheridan elopement may be found in Foote's "Trip to Calais."[1] "Where can I conceal myself from my angry relations?" asks "Jenny." "I vill dis instant put you into de *convent* vere my sister is nun," answers the audacious "Tromfort." "What is to become of my friend?" asks Jenny. "De best way," replies Tromfort, "is for Maister *Dicky* to take de little trip to Dunkirk or Boulogne till matters be settle." "Master Dicky," says Jenny, "was always very partial to me, and so . . . we agreed to give the old ones the slip and take a little tour to the kingdom of France." And then she begs for "a *marrying doctor*," "for I am told that there are one or two who have set up that way in this town."

These stirring events bring us to the first week of April. Except for one hurried scrawl to Brereton, and that probably from London,[2] Sheridan had never corresponded with his friends. On April 15, however, he broke silence by a letter to his brother from Lille. "Everything on our side," he wrote, "has at last succeeded." She "was now fixing on a convent where she has been entered some time. This has been a much more difficult point than you could have imagined, and we have been, I find, extremely fortunate. She has been ill, but is now recovered; this, too, has delayed me. We should have wrote, but have been kept in the most tormenting expectation, from day to day, of receiving your letters; but as everything is now so happily settled here, I will delay no longer giving you that information, though probably I shall set out for England without knowing a syllable of what has happened with you. All is well, I hope, and I hope, too, that though you may have been ignorant for some time of our

[1] Acted in 1778 as "The Capuchin," but first intended for representation in 1776, when it failed to be licensed because of its satire on the Duchess of Kingston as "Lady Kitty Crocodile."

[2] Cf. "W. B.'s" letter of March 22, 1772, to Sheridan, which begins by acknowledging "the few lines you was pleased to send me."

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proceedings, you could never have been uneasy lest anything should tempt me to depart, even in a thought, from the honour and consistency which engaged me at first." This, be it noted, bears out Miss Linley's after-tribute to Sheridan's delicacy and consideration. "I wrote," he continues, "to Mathews above a week ago, which I think was necessary and right. I hope he has acted the one proper part that was left to him, and to speak from my feelings I cannot but say that I shall be very happy to find no further disagreeable consequence pursuing him; for what Brutus says of Cæsar, etc.[1] If I delay one moment longer I lose the post." Sheridan's insouciance proceeded from an ignorance of Mathews's mode of action at Bath, from which he doubtless imagined him exiled. When, five years later, he produced "The Rivals," he laughed away the wrath of outwitted lovers in words that deserve to live. "A rival in the case, is there?" blurts out Sir Lucius, "and you think he has supplanted you unfairly?" "Unfairly," replies Acres, "to be sure he has. He never could have done it fairly."

This letter answered one lately received from Charles Sheridan, and it is known that four days after the elopement Brereton had also communicated with his friend. Yet Sheridan complains of not receiving a line from Bath, and of being unable to recover the letters that had gone astray. His change of destination must have rendered the receipt of home letters precarious; yet this nonchalant youth writes as if he had been out for a holiday, and hastily ends with the terse postscript: "I need not tell you that we altered quite our route. You will soon see me," he adds, "in England."[2] Seventeen days, however, elapsed before he departed, and meanwhile Miss Linley must surely have written to the disconsolate friends at home, or her father

[1] He probably alludes to "Julius Cæsar," Act I., Sc. I., where Brutus, speaking of Cæsar, says to Cassius:

"Set honour in one eye and death i' the other,
And I will look on both indifferently;
For let the gods so speed me as I love
The name of honour more than I fear death."

[2] Sheridan MSS. Cited Moore, Vol. I., p. 68; Rae, Vol. I., p. 169.

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would never have been able to find her, since Sheridan's letters could scarcely have reached him before he tracked the fugitives. She does not seem to have remained with the nuns for more than a very few days. So much had the agitations of the past month told on her health, that Dr. Dolman, "an English physician of York," was called in to prescribe. "From what he perceived of her case," writes Alicia, "he wished to have her more immediately under his care, and he and Mrs. Dolman most kindly invited her to his house."[1] Thither she was removed from the convent, while Sheridan remained at the Hotel Bourbon on the "Grande Place"; and remembrance must have prompted Clara's farewell in his "Duenna," throughout coloured by the memories of this episode:

> "Adieu, thou dreary pile, where never dies
> The sullen echo of repentant sighs;
> Ye sister mourners of each lonely cell,
> Inured to hymns of sorrow, fare ye well!
> For happier scenes I fly this darksome grove,
> —To saints a prison, but a tomb to love!"

Under Dr. Dolman's roof her father eventually found her. Not a tittle of evidence remains for the brief interval at Lille.

But we must revert homewards. During the interval Bath had been all excitement and turmoil. Before Sheridan went he left "a letter," which is known from after-references to have shown up his antagonist's conduct in the most glaring light, and was probably addressed to his heroine's father. The news spread like wildfire, and the newspapers soon turned into two hostile camps. The old rumour of a Scotch elopement was revived, and it was even reported that Mathews had been privy to it—a falsehood

[1] Cf. Sheridan MSS., cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 169, and summarised by Moore, Vol. I., p. 70. Dr. Dolman's letter is cited by Rae on the same page. It is addressed to "Monsieur Sheridan, Gentilhomme Anglais, à l'Hôtel de Bourbon sur la Grande Place." "DEAR SIR," it runs, "it will not be improper to give one of the powders in a glass of white wine twice a day—morning and evening. Don't wait supper for me, because my time is not my own. Compliments and wishes of health to your lady. I remain, R. D." "I have sent the recipe to the apothecary."

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which he flatly denied.[1] Reflections on Miss Linley vied with reflections on Sheridan, and in both cases compromised the lady. The newspaper ball was kept briskly rolling, and before their return (on May 1), the *Bath Chronicle* published an ode in her favour, signed "Amiens,"[2] a signature pointing to some knowledge of their hiding-place. It was four days after the elopement that William Brereton took up his pen. He told Sheridan that he could not "sufficiently commend the part" he had "thought proper to take in this affair," while he rejoiced "most sincerely" that the "dear girl" had "a prospect of enjoying a calm peace of mind." Mathews had called on the morning after they vanished, and had never ceased calling. He swore horribly, and cursed his past in a manner as pitiable as futile. All Bath condemned him. Brereton himself had conveyed two of his messages to Linley, who would listen to neither, saying that "he had been deceived once and would never trust him more"; that all reports, moreover, were "to his prejudice," and that if they met he would not answer for consequences.[3] Brereton counselled him to quit Bath for ever. This Mathews "solemnly promised" to do; but his promises were not to be trusted. "I know Mr. Linley's plan," he concludes, "is to get his daughter to return to Bath, in order to put an end to the many wicked suggestions which the malice of enemies has propagated, and Betsy may expect soon to be persuaded to take this step by letter or perhaps by Mr. Linley in person. . . . I wish you success in your undertaking." Had "Betsy" and Dick received their letters, the visit to Lille would have probably been prevented, and perhaps "The School for Scandal" would never have been written.

Meanwhile Mathews had not been idle elsewhere. That same day he was at the Sheridans', "endeavouring," writes Alicia, "to get news of the fugitives"; and he continued to haunt

[1] Cf. the *Craftsman* of October 10, 1772 (cited by Mr. Green).

[2] April 23, 1772.

[3] It will be noticed that this affords fresh confirmation of another statement in the doubted document.

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their precincts, though "he made no scruple of avowing his passion and his hopes of success but for the intervention of her young friend." Charles Sheridan, at once summoned from solitude by the Sheridans' landlord, had met Mathews. "Violently agitated," and "conceiving himself to have been deceived by both parties," he "unguardedly dropped some expressions of displeasure at his brother's conduct, which the man treasured up." This fact has been questioned also, but the statement is strictly true. Twice did Mathews shift the blame of this hot-headed announcement from his own shoulders to those of Charles, and on the second occasion to those of another as well.[1] On second thoughts, however, Charles himself softened his wrath and changed his opinion; for not two months later we find him approving of his brother's behaviour, and asserting that even their father would "find it impossible to blame it."[2]

Mathews, be it marked, had given his word of honour to quit Bath—a course which, had he been guiltless, he would hardly have taken. But Linley knew his man. Mathews did no such thing. On the contrary, he spread conflicting reports. And, in addition, he declared that Sheridan and Miss Linley would never show their faces again in England; that her protector did

[1] Once, as Alicia relates, in her own presence, and again in London when Sheridan called him to account. Cf. Sheridan's "Parade Coffee House" Statement for Wade's information of May 5; Moore, Vol. I., p. 75; Rae, Vol. I., p. 180; Sheridan MSS. "He convinced Mr. S. that his enmity might be directed solely against his brother and another gentleman at Bath." This again is further corroborated by Alicia, who says that at the first meeting between Sheridan and Mathews the latter assured him that the advertisement "was nothing more than an enquiry about him put in with the sanction of his family." Yet Mr. Green not only doubts Alicia's separate statements—and at his own sweet will—but omits Sheridan's. He thinks that Alicia's statement is uncorroborated elsewhere, whereas Sheridan himself confirms it. And, in any case, the reverse is also uncorroborated, and Alicia was an ear-witness.

[2] Sheridan MSS., cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 186. Charles Sheridan to Richard Chamberlaine, May 13, 1772. His letter, five days later, to the same correspondent also shows that the father was "well enough reconciled to the part which he [Dick] had taken in the affair, as I had convinced him that his motives were wholly honourable."

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not "deserve the treatment of a gentleman."[1] Moreover, he swore to have Sheridan's life, and repeatedly showed his friends bills on France, whither, after his revenge had been sated, he purposed to withdraw.[2] Nor was this bombast; in his fury at having been bested, he went further. Failing the receipt of his enemy's letter from the Continent, he publicly posted him in the *Bath Chronicle*, of April 9,[3] as "a liar and a treacherous scoundrel." The following is the text of this advertisement as it appeared:

"Mr. Richard S****** having attempted in a letter left behind him for that purpose to account for his scandalous method of running away from this Place, by insinuations, derogating from my character and that of a young Lady, innocent as far as relates to me or my knowledge: since which he has neither taken any notice of my letters, or even informed his own family of the place where he has hid himself—I can no longer think he deserves the treatment of a gentleman, and therefore shall trouble myself no longer about him, than in this public manner to post him as a L*** and a treacherous S**********." It will be noticed that in his anger Mathews appends the wrong number of asterisks to two of his capitals.

"And as I am convinced," he continued, "that there have been many incendiaries concerned in the propagation of this infamous Lie, if any of them, unprotected by *age*, *infirmities*, or profession, will dare to acknowledge the part they have acted, and affirm *to* what they have said *of* me, they may depend on receiving the proper reward of their villainy, in the most public manner. The world will be candid enough to judge properly

[1] Cf., for the first and second of these vilifications, Charles Sheridan's letter, just quoted. He adds, ". . . All on the supposition that my brother had married Miss L—— and would never return to Bath." Cf. also Sheridan's own "Statement," drawn up at the Parade Coffee House two days before the first duel. "He [Mathews] laboured with a cruel industry to vilify his [Sheridan's] conduct in England." Moore, Vol. I., p. 73; Rae, Vol. I., p. 179. The third piece of abuse is implied from Mathews's "advertisement" shortly to be cited.

[2] Cf. Sheridan's "Parade Coffee House" Statement of Tuesday (May 5th).

[3] Rae says "Wednesday the 8th of April."

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(I make no doubt) of any private abuse on this subject for the future, for no one can defend himself from an accusation he is ignorant of.—THOMAS MATHEWS."[1]

Thus, *Athanasius contra mundum.* The world, however, was not candid enough to take Mathews's part in the long run, nor would Athanasius ever have apologised to an Arian as Mathews was shortly to apologise to Sheridan.

Before Sheridan's return Mathews had beaten a retreat to London. Sheridan did not even hear of this insult till nearly three weeks after its publication; but meanwhile his enemy ascertained his address, and wrote more than one "abusive threat" to the man who had baulked him. Directly Sheridan knew of the advertisement, he "answered him from France (hurried and surprised), that he would never sleep in England till he had thanked him as he deserved."[2] And he kept his word. But in his absence Alicia constituted herself his champion. She saw Mathews himself after the *Bath Chronicle* libel, and she "called him to severe account." Thereupon, she tells us, he "had the insolence and baseness to assert that her brother Charles was privy to what he had done. On speaking to him on the subject, he was greatly shocked, for, however displeased with his brother, he was incapable of countenancing such conduct, and nothing but Mr. Mathews quitting Bath at the time prevented his taking up the matter in a very serious manner." So then, as against Mathews, Charles Sheridan ranged himself on his brother's side, though his inherent caution is always manifest.

Mathews's "advertisement" forms a dividing-line in the dispute. It diverted public opinion from his own treatment of Miss Linley to Sheridan's. Was Sheridan her deliverer or debaser, a gentleman or a sneak?—these were the questions. Sheridan had accused Mathews, and now Mathews vilified

[1] *Bath Chronicle*, April 9, 1772; Moore, Vol. I., p. 71; Rae, Vol. I., p. 173; "Linley, Sheridan, and Mathews at Bath," p. 40. The writer has used the transcript from the *Bath Chronicle* in the Dufferin Papers, which differs at the close in putting "for no one" instead of "as nobody."

[2] Sheridan's "Parade Coffee House Statement."

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Sheridan. That his abuse took effect is shown by the fact that when the irate father first heard of the affair, he wrote a hasty letter in which he put the worst construction on his eloping son's designs[1]—a verdict, however, which reflection soon led him to change. And the partisan nature of the gossip on both sides is proved, later, by the tattle about the duels. But the side-issues of those duels were soon to obliterate the real root of the affair: the sorrows of Helen were merged in the siege of Troy. The rumours that then ensued are responsible for some misconception as to the origin of the trouble, which in truth was Mathews. A magazine account, twenty years onwards, describing Mathews's "paragraph" as "a reflection on the intimacy between Mr. Sheridan and Miss Linley," makes it the source of the first duel. His "advertisement" *was* the source, but it did not so much reflect on Miss Linley as on Sheridan, who had boldly denounced Mathews. Still later accounts trace the first duel to the same aspersion "of a young lady's character." These, however, are loose and vague statements, though they have a double truth behind them: firstly, Mathews's conduct, which Sheridan had held up to odium, and, secondly, Mathews's attempt to hoist his supplanter with his own petard, to parry the charge of having sought to dishonour Miss Linley by retorting it against his foe. A further account, three days after the second duel, asserted that "Sheridan fell defending a young lady's honour," whereas, in fact, the second duel sprang from a different cause—Sheridan's accusation of cowardice.[2] Yet arguments based on such babble as this have been pressed to prove that Mathews was an innocent whom Sheridan had injured.[3] "Les absents ont toujours tort." None the less,

[1] Cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 185.

[2] This is recognised by the advertisement in the *Bath Chronicle* of July 8, which specifically attributes this duel to "Mr. S.'s refusal to sign a paper testifying the spirit and propriety of Mr. M.'s behaviour in their former encounter."

[3] Cf. "Linley, Sheridan and Mathews at Bath," pp. 70 *et seq.* Mr. Green contends that the letter (or "letters" as he puts it) which Sheridan

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these reports at least evince the public impression that Mathews had slandered Miss Linley—a cowardice incompatible both with his own reputation and any respect for the woman whose good name he professed to guard.

To return to Lille. Linley arrived at Dr. Dolman's during the last week of April—probably on April 24—and doubtless brought with him the perturbing news of the Bath advertisement, though Alicia tells us that Sheridan's attention was first drawn to it through an old schoolfellow (possibly Archdall) in London. Since, however, he had already sworn not to sleep in England till he had called out Mathews, her recollection must be at fault. If Linley had believed but a tithe of Mathews's aspersions, a stormy scene would have ensued. But so far as can be known, he did not behave like a father robbed of his child. On the contrary, "After some private conversation with Mr. Sheridan," proceeds Alicia, "he appeared quite reconciled to his daughter, but insisted on her returning to England with him, to fulfil several engagements that he had entered into on her account. The whole party set out together the next day, Mr. Linley having previously promised to allow his daughter to return to Lille when her engagements were over." Together, then, they travelled, and together they all reached London, though even here Alicia's testimony has been traversed. It is warranted, however, by one of Charles Sheridan's letters to his uncle, which notes that his father had only just heard of "Dick's safe return from France *with Mr. and Miss Linley*."[1] At nine o'clock on the night of Wednesday,

left behind him was the real source of the charges against Mathews. But two of the newspaper reports quoted by him in this behalf appeared in "The Historical and Biographical Magazine" for 1792, and the *General Evening Post* of July 4, 1772, and the rest belong to 1808 and after. A further and contemporary one, however, in the *Bath Chronicle* of July 1, 1772 (which he fails to cite), ascribes the second duel between Mathews and Sheridan to "their former dispute respecting an amiable young lady which Mr. M. considered as improperly adjusted"; and the *St. James Chronicle*, too, of July 4 says the same.

[1] Charles Sheridan to Richard Chamberlaine, "BATH, May 18, 1772." Sheridan MSS., given by Rae, Vol. I., p. 186. Mr. Green, however,

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April 29, they drove to the same hotel,[1] and there for the nonce, wearied and overwrought, we must leave them.

The duels (over which many word-duels have been fought) necessitate a fresh chapter, for they form a separate act bristling with incidents. The memories of the elopement linger in "The Duenna." Those of the duels haunt part of "The School for Scandal," and have been laughed into immortality by "The Rivals."

prefers Watkins' account "written without the aid of Mrs. LeFanu." Cf. his "Linley, etc., at Bath," p. 43.

[1] Here Mr. Green is in error again, for he names the hour as on May-day, which was Friday. Had he scrutinised Sheridan's letter to Wade, the master of the Bath ceremonies, he would have avoided this mistake. Sheridan's letter at Bath to Wade, dated "Sat. 12 o'clock May 2d, 1772," says: "I called on Mr. Mathews *last Wednesday* night." That he called on Mathews on the night of his return to London is undisputed. Mr. Green, however, takes Sheridan's "Parade Coffee House" letter, which is dated "nine o'clock" of the following "Tuesday," as implying that Sheridan arrived on Friday. All that Sheridan there says on this head is "Mr. S. arrived in London at 9 o'clock at night," and then, after describing his visit, "Mr. S. came to Bath." Mr. Green (cf. his book, p. 43) seems unaware that this document is dated "Tuesday," but Rae gives the date in his transcript, Vol. I., p. 182. Moore omits it, only giving part of the contents.

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RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN in youth

(from an original drawing attributed to Gainsborough,

in the Author's possession)

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CHAPTER V

THE DUELS

(May—July, 1772)

"Pray, sir, be easy. The quarrel is a very pretty quarrel as it stands; we should only spoil it by trying to explain it."—*The Rivals*, Act IV., Sc. III.

THE excursion to cloudland was ended, and "alarums" were now to begin. Sheridan's first duel with Mathews has never yet been pictured from a close collation of the complete authorities, and the best, though not the liveliest prologue to our action, will be to name them in a note.[1]

The twisted strands of so many stories can scarcely be unravelled without verbal quotation. None of the below-named sources contradict each other in their main particulars, and

[1] They are: (1) Alicia's narrative, used by both Moore and Rae. (2) Sheridan's letter of "Sat. 12 o'clock May 2nd, 1772," to "William Wade, Esq.," the master of the Bath ceremonies, transcribed by Moore, but unused by Rae. (3) Sheridan's Bath "Parade Coffee House" letter of "9 o'clock Tuesday night" [May 5, 1772], which Rae alone has transcribed in full. (4) Sheridan's recital of all the circumstances (after evident consultation with his second, Ewart) in a letter of the 1st of July ensuing (shortly after his second duel) to Captain Knight (Mathews's uncle and second on the earlier occasion). This has been transcribed by Moore only, and Sheridan's copy of it is among the Sheridan MSS. It was given to Paumier (Sheridan's second in the second encounter) during the following October. But it remained unanswered, and Sheridan, in a letter to his father of that date, feared that it had been suppressed. (Cf. Sheridan to his father from Waltham Abbey, "Sunday" [August 30, 1772]. "I was thinking of sending another copy to Mr. Wade, lest they might have suppressed it," and cf. Rae, Vol. I., at p. 214.) (5) Mathews's "apology," which Rae appends in facsimile, and which was first published in the *Bath Chronicle* of May, 1772. (6) Charles Sheridan's two letters to his uncle Richard Chamberlaine, the first indorsed as received on May 13, the second dated "BATH, May 18." Both of these are transcribed by Rae alone.

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each supplements omissions. It is to be regretted that, while Mathews evidently drew up his own version, its drift can only be gathered from allusions. Sheridan's own recital however to Captain Knight, deliberately prepared in reply, is a document of weight. He expressly states his readiness to support its assertions on his honour or his oath, and Knight was his antagonist's second on the first occasion.

When the runaways returned on that Wednesday evening Sheridan was in no mood for conciliation. He had sat up all night at Canterbury to redeem his quixotic vow of sleeplessness till honour should be avenged, and Mathews, who must have heard from Sheridan, had added insult to injury by two abusive letters which somehow or other had reached him. These ironically assured the youth that he might be found at any hour, and begged him not to "deprive himself of so much sleep or stand on any ceremony." Sheridan, thirsting for revenge, yet eager to seem cool, was in much the same temper as the young Disraeli when he challenged O'Connell. But he promised Linley to do nothing rash, nor to "let anything pass between them" till he had gone back to Bath.[1] Linley seems to have been quite satisfied with Sheridan's part as his daughter's "knight-errant" (the word is Charles Sheridan's), and the nightingale was now safe in her cage, fluttering and exhausted. She little knew what impended. When Sheridan hurried out of the room, father and daughter clearly fancied that he was off to find young Ewart, who would accompany him homewards.[2]

To Ewart he went, but not to Bath. Not an hour elapsed before he had gleaned from his kinsman that Mathews now lodged at one Cocklin's in the Crutched Friars.[3] Ewart further told him that Mathews had threatened violence and

[1] Sheridan's "Parade Coffee House" letter.

[2] Cf. the "Parade Coffee House" letter, ". . . in case he (Sheridan) had not found him (Mathews) in Town, he had called on Mr. Ewart to accompany him to Bath, being bound by Mr. Linley," etc., with Alicia's narrative, "He left Miss Linley under her father's care at an Hotel."

[3] Moore misprints the name "Cochlin."

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warned him "to advise his friend not even to come his way without a sword, as he could not answer for the consequence." Fuel to the flame! The very word was enough to rouse Sheridan's opposition, and, being of Sir Lucius' opinion that "there's no being shot at without a little risk," he immediately provided himself with pistols.[1]

Thus armed, sleepless, reckless, travel-stained and alone, he presented himself past midnight on Mathews's doorstep. Naturally denied admittance, he persisted. Mathews came down, "told him he should be admitted, and retired to rest again." Not much rest however did Sheridan permit him. Like Don Jerome in "The Duenna," Mathews might have exclaimed:

"What vagabonds are these I hear?"

The invader of his peace persisted in the siege. Then Sheridan was told that the door-key was lost. Still he persisted; and there he stood for more than an hour, battering and shouting, till the sober neighbourhood must have cursed his presence. By two o'clock his importunity prevailed. When he entered he found a being different indeed from the anticipated fire-eater. Alicia paints Mathews as a coward, but it seems likelier that, shivering and anxious to stave off an issue, he simulated fear. He "dressed" (says Sheridan), called him his "dear friend"; one (adds the sister) with whom "he should be particularly unhappy to have any difference": he "complained of the cold, endeavoured to get heat into him," and "forced" Sheridan to sit down. No sooner did Mathews espy the peeping pistols, says Alicia, than he was "not a little alarmed," and her brother asserts that never had he seen a man "behave so perfectly dastardly." Finding that the *Bath Chronicle* had not been scrutinised, Mathews assured his visitor that the whole affair had been "quite misrepresented," that the advertisement was merely an expedient which the Sheridans had

[1] Alicia's account. A bill for pistols is mentioned in one of Sheridan's letters.

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sanctioned, that "he never meant to quarrel," and that the real offenders were "his brother and another gentleman at Bath," by whom he probably meant Brereton. Nothing could be more peaceable, and Sheridan was calmed. Mathews's "behaviour" (states Charles Sheridan) "was so very condescending, that Dick let him off for a very small concession to be made in the Bath paper," and Sheridan's letter to Wade further informs us that Mathews then promised to publish a *full* explanation. In any case Bath was to be enlightened, and the slanderer to recant. A "pacific meeting" was arranged for the next day, "which ended," as Sheridan told the master of ceremonies, "in those advertisements and the letter to you." Their wording was next discussed, and several drafts seem to have been proposed. Sheridan protested himself as more than satisfied, for he had never anticipated "even a verbal explanation." In the event, however, the whole project fell through, for when Sheridan reached Bath a few days later, he learned not only that Mathews had falsified the circumstances leading up to his original "advertisement," but that he had turned the apology now proffered into the mere "consequences of an explanation." This new perfidy was too much. Sheridan at once countermanded the explanatory announcement in the presence of Colonel Gould, a mutual friend.[1] All this, however, is a peep into the future. We must return to the disputants in Crutched Friars.

These scraps of a five hours' conversation are manifestly but a fragment. Sheridan was overwrought now, and overwrought when he set down some of the facts six days afterwards. Though it seems unlikely that Mathews showed the white feather on this occasion, yet neither can he be held incapable of cowardice. In the second duel of next July, it is true, he showed (to quote a witness) the most "intrepid, cool and genuine resolution."[2] But in the first, which approaches,

[1] Cf. the recital addressed to Captain Knight. Sheridan MSS. The passage is cited by Moore, Vol. I., p. 84, and shows that there was a "*first* proposed advertisement."

[2] Cf. Barnett's account, cited by Moore, Vol. I., pp. 88—92.

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he bore himself, if Sheridan and his sister are to be believed, like a craven. With men of Mathews's stamp, supple and braggadocio, such variations are not unnatural; much depends on their physical state and on what they have to brave out. On the second emergency Mathews had to contradict a public imputation of cowardice, and that duel was fought in the Bath arena. On the first he had to uphold what he knew to be an equivocal position. But in these preliminaries nothing but comfort seems to have been at stake. The elder, stronger, and more experienced man would naturally wish to appease and get rid of a visitor so untimely as this angry boy. Prudence, too, may have intervened: it was the worst moment for an unequal contest, and Mathews's pet weapon was the rapier.[1] Nor should it be forgotten that he must needs have recollected his young and apprehensive wife. Sheridan's remembrance, however, that Mathews "detained" him till the milkmaid went her rounds hardly carries conviction. It must have been the importunate stripling who kept a man seven years his senior out of bed, chilly and talkative, long past the grey of dawn. What is certain is that Sheridan departed trusting in Mathews's word. He had come in like a lion, he went out like a lamb, and returned, it may be hoped, under the morning sun to an excellent breakfast.

This happened, as we have said, on Wednesday. Sheridan did not accompany the Linleys to Bath till the Saturday.[2] On Thursday occurred the "pacific meeting" with Mathews, which must have tranquillised the Linleys. For Friday's chronicle no evidence remains. Sheridan, secure of his *amende* and in high spirits, would pass his time in attending his lady-love, and he would be reluctant to start till she had sufficiently recovered from one journey to venture on another. Bath was

[1] He *chose* swords for this encounter. Cf. Alicia's account.

[2] We know this from Sheridan's own statement in the "Coffee House" epitome:—"Mr. S. stayed but three hours at Bath." Beyond any question Sheridan left Bath again for London on the night of Saturday, May 2. There is further testimony as to this in the contradiction of the rumour that the duel took place in Bath, published in the *Bath Chronicle* for May 7.

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reached on the Saturday afternoon.[1] Sheridan's first visit was to the *Bath Chronicle* office, where he saw Cruttwell, its proprietor, who showed him the text of the incriminating libel. His blood boiled, and he rushed off to his brother, who, though vexed at the elopement, expressed horror at having been since involved as an accomplice.[2] That he had blurted out something on first hearing of Miss Linley's flight he owned, but his words had been distorted. Nor did Cruttwell fail to disillusionise Sheridan as to Mathews's sincerity in the promised explanations.[3] These new advertisements, said Sheridan, were the result on his part of "more charity than judgment," while his brother fully agreed that quibbling could no longer avail. "It was impossible," he added afterwards, "to put up with these public and private insults," and the kind of "apology" that Mathews had proffered proved to be "no concession at all." Others too were consulted, and all of them indorsed this opinion. Everything was at stake. Unless Dick "properly" resented such treatment he could "never show his face" again. Charles did not hesitate. Though he had just been appointed "Secretary to the Legation in Sweden," and their father was returning from Dublin for the necessary preparations, he, the head and hope of the family, would attend Dick on his mission. He had quite changed his mind about the runaways. Even the most censorious now owned that Dick had behaved with the "strictest honour," and his brother's conduct had been the more praiseworthy considering the dubious circumstances, and in an age "when the world" did "not abound in Josephs." As for himself, he was quit of his "ridiculous passion," which he excused by pleading that charms like Miss Linley's would

[1] Cf. Sheridan's own statement, already cited, that he only stayed there three hours, and Alicia's that he spent the evening with them.

[2] According to Alicia, he would have taken serious notice earlier of Mathews's insinuations but for that gentleman's departure from Bath.

[3] "In an hour," wrote Sheridan, in one of his statements, he found every one of his adversary's assertions totally and positively disavowed, and (as he wrote in the other) he also discovered the true meaning of "Mr. Mathews's benevolent interposition" in his own "family."

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turn the head of men far less attached to her than his brother.[1]

Thus allied, the pair hastened to their expectant sisters. Sheridan, after his manner, disclosed nothing of what had transpired. The next two of three crowded hours passed cheerfully, and Alicia, when she retired from a table (on which decanters must have been set and emptied), never guessed for a moment that another journey was in store. Yet on that very night and without a word of warning the brothers posted off to London.[2]

Here Alicia takes up the tale. Great was their consternation next morning to find them flown. It was rumoured that high words had been heard over-night and that a duel was in train. Though this was discredited, yet danger and uncertainty were in the air, and Alicia at once made her way to the Crescent to learn what Miss Linley knew of their movements. Dr. Priestley, free-thinker and afterwards Jacobin, then lodged under their roof, and he witnessed a painful scene. Miss Linley, crushed by a sense of the misfortune which seemed to pursue her, swooned more than once, and a physician had to be summoned. Alicia and her sister fainted also, and at length "Mr. Linley put Miss Sheridan into a Chair, and taking her Sister by the hand, conducted them to the melancholy home"—a home that remained melancholy till the evening of the next Tuesday, which brought the deserters back.

It was now Sunday. Once more in London, the brothers lost no time. Brereton's town lodgings were visited, and they next drove to the Ewarts' Thames Street abode,[3] when the young son,

[1] Cf. his letter to R. Chamberlaine of May 18, 1772, cited by Rae, Vol. I., at p. 186.

[2] The above account is derived from a combination of Alicia's narrative, Sheridan's "Wade" and "Parade Coffee House" recitals, and Charles Sheridan's two letters to his uncle. It would be too long to give further citations. Suffice it to say that these substantiate every word either by plain statement or plain implication.

[3] That this was their home also appears from the mangled account of the duel in the *Bath Chronicle* for Wednesday, May 7.

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Sheridan's best friend, immediately consented to act as second.[1] That evening, Charles Sheridan carried his brother's challenge from Brereton's to Mathews. The budding diplomatist tried hard to prevent an encounter. For two hours he argued with Mathews, but in vain. "No further concessions were forthcoming,"[2] and as Sheridan's object was an unqualified retractation, there was nothing for it but the duel. It was appointed to take place at six o'clock on Monday evening in Hyde Park, and Alicia remembered what Sheridan confirms,[3] that Mathews it was who decided that the weapons should be swords, though pistols were brought also. His uncle, Captain Knight, was to attend him.

Sheridan could now profit by the fencing lessons which Angelo had given him during their Frith Street diversions.

About six in the evening of May the fourth, he and Ewart met Mathews and Knight at the rendezvous. A chaise and four stood in waiting at the Park gates by the turnpike. They immediately walked to the "Ring," which neighboured what is now known as Rotten Row. Sheridan again tried to make his adversary recant, but to no purpose. Then he chose his ground for the encounter. Mathews objected to it as uneven, and appealed to his second. The four of them crossed the Ring and proceeded to a plateau at the back of a building. Sheridan had taken his stand and drawn his sword, when his second descried an observant sentinel. Accordingly the combatants withdrew to a "seemingly convenient" place. Mathews continued to raise objections, and this time he, in his turn, complained of some onlookers, though Sheridan asserts that these were distant. Thereupon Mathews proposed that they

[1] Later and misinformed accounts make Charles the second, but one says that he remained at Brereton's. Sheridan, however, names Ewart as his second, both in the "Coffee House" account and in his recital addressed to Captain Knight. Alicia's after-record is mistaken in supposing that Brereton acted as Sheridan's second, though he may well have been asked to do so.

[2] Cf. Charles Sheridan's first letter to his uncle.

[3] In his recital addressed to Knight he says that Mathews had "previously declined pistols."

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should retire to the "Hercules Pillars" (at Hyde Park Corner) till the coast was clear. After a space they returned, and again Sheridan drew his sword. Mathews then demurred to an officer who seemed to be watching them, and Ewart gave his word that nobody should intercept those who might need the chaise. Mathews, however, remained obstinate, and actually proposed to defer the duel till the following morning. Sheridan told Knight that this was "trifling work." He would brook no delay and accosted the officer, who politely "retired." Meanwhile, however, his opponent had got back again to the gates. Sheridan and Ewart then called to Knight, and the three re-adjourned to "Hercules Pillars." There it was arranged to meet at the Bedford Coffee House, where Knight would acquaint them with Mathews's waiting-place. This proved to be the Castle Tavern at the corner where Henrietta and Bedford Streets adjoin. They engaged a room. It was now dark. Ewart took up the lights, and after some vain "declarations" in Sheridan's favour by Mathews, who alternated between obstinacy and compromise,[1] the combatants set to work in grim earnest.

The sequel is best related in Sheridan's words, carefully considered nearly two months afterwards in a letter addressed to Knight, his antagonist's second,[2] while Alicia's recital adds that a Mr. Smith, a Sheridan kinsman, was present as surgeon. The half-lit scene is melodramatic.

"I struck Mr. Mathews' point so much out of the line," says Sheridan, "that I stepped up and caught hold of his wrist, or the hilt of his sword, while the point of mine was at his breast. You ran in and caught hold of my arm, exclaiming '*Don't kill him!*'" [This Sheridan in another account terms a well-meant, but irritating interference.[3]] "I struggled to disengage

[1] This detail comes from the shorter "Coffee House" statement, which thus supplements the longer account addressed to Captain Knight:—"Mr. M. made many declarations in favour of Mr. S." Otherwise this statement (the sole one produced by Rae) only summarises the other.

[2] Sheridan MSS.; and cf. Moore, Vol. I., p. 80.

[3] The "Parade Coffee House" account, Sheridan MSS.; and cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 181.

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my arm, and said his sword was in my power. Mr. Mathews called out twice or thrice: '*I beg my life.*' We were parted. You immediately said: '*There, he has begged his life, and now there is an end of it;*' and on Mr. Ewart's saying that, when his sword was in my power, as I attempted no more, you should not have interfered, you replied that you '*were wrong,*' but that you had '*done it hastily and to prevent mischief*'—or words to that effect. Mr. Mathews then hinted that I was rather '*obliged to your interposition*' for the advantage.[1] You declared that *before* you did so, 'both the swords were in Mr. Sheridan's power.' Mr. Mathews still seemed resolved to give it another turn, and observed that '*he had never quitted his sword.*' Provoked at this, I then swore (with too much heat, perhaps) that he should either give up his sword and I would break it, or go to his guard again." [Here Sheridan stood on firm ground: there could be no objection to renewing the contest.] "He refused, but on my persisting, either gave it into my hand, or flung it on the table, or the ground (*which* I will not absolutely affirm). I broke it and flung the hilt to the other end of the room. He exclaimed at this. I took a mourning sword[2] from Mr. Ewart, and, presenting him with mine, gave my honour that what had passed should never be mentioned by me, and he might now right himself again. He replied that he '*would never draw a sword against the man who had given him his life*'; but, on his still exclaiming against the indignity of breaking his sword (which he had brought upon himself), Mr. Ewart offered him the pistols, and some altercation passed between them. Mr. Mathews said that '*he could never show his face if it were known that his sword were broke—that such a thing had never been done—that it cancelled all obligations,*' *etc., etc.* You seemed to think that it was wrong, and we both proposed that if he never misrepresented the affair it should not be mentioned by us. This was settled. I then

[1] This, be it marked, closely resembles Mathews's subterfuge in ascribing his previous "concession" to Sheridan's "explanation."

[2] A sword used in Court mourning with an inferior blade; it may be pointed out that Beaumarchais, too, offered to use one in *his* duel.

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asked Mr. Mathews whether (as he had expressed himself sensible of, and shocked at the indignity he had done me in his advertisement) it did not occur to him that he owed me another satisfaction; and that as it was in his power to do it without discredit, I supposed he would not hesitate. This he absolutely refused unless conditionally; I insisted on it, and said I would not leave the room till it was settled. After much altercation and with much ill grace, he gave the apology which afterwards appeared."

This "apology," published in the *Bath Chronicle* two days afterwards,[1] ran as follows. Its manuscript is written in a thin, feminine hand, and the word "retract" looks more like "intreat," or even "retreat":—

"Being convinced that the expressions I made use of to Mr. Sheridan's disadvantage were the effects of passion and misrepresentation, I retract what I have said to his disadvantage, and particularly beg his pardon for my advertisement in the *Bath Chronicle*." "The expressions I made use of to Mr. Sheridan's disadvantage" seems a strange euphemism for words like "a liar" and "a scoundrel."

Thus for a time the affair blew over, and so far Sheridan's point had been gained. His version of the affray closes with a set of queries addressed to his opponent, and from these alone can Mathews's version be inferred. Mathews evidently contended that Sheridan detained him in conversation during the preliminaries of the Park; that never, subsequently, did he beg his life; that Sheridan broke his sword without warning. But he omitted to state that Sheridan offered him his own, and, above all, he maintained that the apology was "a mere point of generosity," yielded, he said, because Sheridan ceased to require it. Sheridan, on the other hand, from first to last, never changed his account, and he disdained to believe that Knight could have sanctioned Mathews's "falsehood and misrepresentation." He had heard "that in Wales 'the nephew' never *told his story*" before

[1] The *Bath Chronicle* usually appeared on Wednesdays, but sometimes, as in this instance, on a Thursday.

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his uncle's face, and that "Mr. Knight . . . never there insinuated anything" to the conqueror's "disadvantage."[1]

Whether Sheridan was justified in disarming Mathews as he did, and in breaking his sword, the connoisseurs of duello must decide. The real point seems to have been whether Mathews did or did not "quit his sword." But in any case, Mathews never denied that Sheridan stood his ground and doggedly tried to bring affairs to an issue; nor could he deny that rather than pursue the conflict he, Mathews, surrendered on paper. Who can doubt that in depicting Bob Acres with his "Aye, true, *my honour*!" Sheridan cast a good-humoured after-glance at his enemy's hesitation?

Worn out with prolonged exertion, the brothers presented themselves at King's Mead Street on Tuesday afternoon. Sheridan showed the apology with pride to his sister, and at once dispatched it to the printers. All Bath rang with the battle. The press made the most of a sensation, and worked up its details till they resembled the wild talk in the last act of "The School for Scandal." Everything was falsified, and falsified at random. The duel had taken place two days before it happened, and at Crutched Friars; Sheridan had been "run through the body" and carried to Ewart's; Mathews and Knight had flown to France.[2] This was promptly and authoritatively contradicted—probably by Sheridan—in the *Bath Chronicle*. On all sides the victor was applauded, and when Mathews returned, *en route* for Wales, he was shunned and scouted. But he stayed long enough to submit his own account to Wade, and for a time the master of ceremonies inclined in his favour.[3]

In the midst of this hubbub the Roman Father came back. If he had misliked the elopement, he was disgusted at the duel. At first the impersonator of "Cato" and "King John" must have indulged in "King Cambyses' vein." But when Charles bore witness to Dick's undoubted courage, the father himself

[1] Cf. Moore, Vol. I., p. 84.

[2] Cf. *London Evening Post*, May 6, 1772. The *Evening News* contained an elaborate account equally untrue.

[3] Sheridan's account, addressed to Knight.

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was proud to own that his son's character was "excellent," and that he was "much beloved."[1] An adept in Restoration comedy, he may well have deemed one of Vanbrugh's sentences prophetic: "he has been a rogue from his cradle, Dick has, but he has his deserts too."[2] Convinced, however, that his son's French leave had been honourably quixotic, he now considered its London sequel a sheer necessity. The family honour had been satisfied, nor did any cherish that honour more than the professor of elocution. But one thing permanently vexed him. Honour could not be vindicated gratis, and the bills now began to pour in.[3] From young Sheridan's correspondence with Thomas Grenville during the later part of this year we know that not all of these were for chaises and ammunition. But boys will be boys, and the father gladly turned from his firebrand of a scapegrace to the lucrative perfections of Charles, the rising ambassador. In July that paragon, for whom a Mr. Wheatley had secured his post, was to start with the Envoy for Stockholm.

But ere May ended Elizabeth Linley was in league with the month of love, blossom and nightingales. The magic of that month has been supremely expressed by Heine:—

"Im wunderschönen monat Mai,
Als alle knospen sprangen,
Da ist in meinen herzen
Die liebe aufgegangen."[4]

Gladly as old Sheridan would have erased the Linleys from his visiting list, the lovers met often, if in secret. Their tryst was that grotto, across the meads by Purdie's garden,

[1] Sheridan MSS., C. to R. B. Sheridan, "LONDON, July 3rd, 1772," cited by Moore, Vol. I., p. 100, and T. Sheridan to R. Chamberlaine, "July 9th, 1772," cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 203.

[2] "The Confederacy," Act III., Sc. II.

[3] Cf. Alicia's account, and for the preceding facts Charles Sheridan's letters to his uncle combined with Alicia's assertions.

[4] Which may be most imperfectly rendered:—

"In May, the lovely month of May,
When bud springs into blossom,
Love too obeyed the summons
And rose within my bosom."

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which has been already pictured. It was shaded by a willow and approached by winding footpaths. Five years later, "Sylvio" thus recalled those meetings in verses mourning the absence of "Laura," who was then his wife.

"Near Avon's ridgy bank there grows
A willow of no vulgar size:
That tree first heard poor Sylvio's woes,
And heard how bright were Laura's eyes.

Its boughs were shade from heat or shower,
Its roots a moss-grown seat became;
Its leaves would strew the maiden's bower,
Its bark was shattered with her name.

Once on a blossom-crowned day
Of mirth-inspiring May,
Sylvio, beneath this willow's sober shade
In sullen contemplation laid,
Did mock the meadow's flowery pride,—
Railed at the dance and sportive ring;
The tabor's call he did deride,
And said, *It was not Spring*." [1]

And there is another and inferior strain which probably belongs to this May-cycle:—

"Shall my Eliza to the birds and trees
Alone communicate her tuneful lays?
Still breathe her rhyme to the unmindful breeze,
And be content with Echo's idle praise?

Oh! let your Sylvio share, my gentlest love,
Let Sylvio share each line that you rehearse,
Or will he hate flowers, elms, sweet bird and grove
Which shall inspire the too unsocial verse." [2]

The penultimate line almost reminds us of Sheridan's own parodies in the mouth of his Tilburina.

It was, then, in this very May, and to commemorate one of their

[1] Cf. Moore, Vol. I., p. 200. With regard to Sheridan's metrical theories and the variations in his "Ode to Scandal," it should be noted that the one change of metre in the stanzas given is followed by no less than five other marked variations, and that three changes of emphasis on the refrain follow.

[2] This set is transcribed by Rae (Vol. II., p. 113) from an album bequeathed by Mrs. Sheridan to Mrs. Canning. It was begun at Harrow in 1782.

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stolen interviews, that Sheridan sent Miss Linley his well-known poem of "Uncouth is this moss-covered grotto of stone." Their future was still clouded, and harsh parents forbade their union. Mathews had fled to his Welsh home, but who knew what fresh machinations might be forthcoming? No wonder that Miss Linley longed for a speedy marriage and a recognition in the light of day. But Sheridan dreaded haste,[1] and if he now offended her by prescribing procrastination, she would not long remain offended. As he sang afterwards in his "Duenna," in a verse perhaps belonging to this moment,

"By him we love offended,
How soon our anger flies!
One day apart, 'tis ended,
Behold him, and it dies."

The Grotto-poem demands quotation. It is long, and it is here subjoined for the first time exactly as it was transcribed by Charles Sheridan. The words differ in several respects from those of the received text.[2] The metre is that used many years later by Moore in his "She is far from the land":—

THE GROTTO.

BY R. B. SHERIDAN TO MRS. SHERIDAN WHEN MISS LINLEY.

"Uncouth is this moss-covered Grotto of stone,
And damp is the shade of this dew-dripping tree,
Yet I this rude Grotto with rapture will own,
And, Willow, thy damps are refreshing to me.

[1] He wrote to that effect after his second duel. Cf. Moore, Vol. I., p. 102.

[2] The usual version (cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 188) is evidently a revision, and it is interesting to note the differences. "Laura" stands for "Delia" throughout, and we shall find "Laura" and "Silvio" reappearing hereafter. In the last line of the second stanza "one" stands instead of "the." Stanza four is omitted. The second line of the sixth stanza runs, "She frowned, but no rage in her looks did I see," and is followed by another and smoother variant:—

"She frowned; but reflection had clouded her brow,
She sighed, but perhaps 'twas in pity for me,"

which is followed by our penultimate stanza "Then wave thy leaves briskly, thou willow of woe;" where the third line, however, is improved to

"I cannot, I will not believe it was so,"

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For this is the Grotto where Delia reclined
As late I in secret her confidence sought,
And this is the Tree kept her safe from the wind
As blushing she heard the grave lesson I taught.

Then tell me, thou Grotto of moss-covered stone,
And tell me, thou Willow, with leaves dripping dew,
Did Delia seemed vexed when Horatio was gone,
And did she confess her resentment to you?

Oh, why do you shake your sad leaves to the Gale,
Green willow, and seem thus to sigh for my woe;
And was she indeed then displeased at my tale,
And did she, green willow, tell you she was so?

Methinks now each branch as you're waving it, tries
To whisper a cause for the sorrow I feel,
Ye hint how she frowned when I dared to advise,
And sighed when she saw that I did it with zeal.

True, true, silly leaves; so she did, I allow,
But I tell you no token of rage could I see;
No, no—I will never believe it was so,
She was not, she could not be angry with me.

* * * *

For well did she know that my Heart meant no wrong,
It sank at the thought but of giving her pain,
And trusted its cause to a faltering tongue
That erred from the feelings it could not explain.

and "that" in the fourth is replaced by "which." The succeeding stanza begins "Yet" and not "But," and in the first line of the next "On" replaces "In"; while the third is bettered to "And just let them fall," etc. In like manner the second line of the next runs "Let them fall on her bosom of snow," etc. In the second line of the eleventh stanza the epithet "still-running" is changed to "slow-winding," and in the last line of the same stanza "lover" is altered to "poet." The twelfth opens with "Nay, more" instead of "Or more," and in its second line the word "and" is added to "sometimes," which improves the metre. In the third line "be proud to support" well replaces "for hours support," and the three repeating stanzas at the close are omitted. Moore antedates this poem as if it had preceded the elopement, and moreover actually suggests that "Angerianus" might have prompted the thought of the ninth stanza. Cf. Vol. I., p. 50. But Moore himself in his own case stoutly defends himself against such unexpected coincidences. Cf. "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 244. And Sheridan's friend Halhed had already been surprised to find a conceit of his own anticipated by Pope.

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But oh, if indeed, I've offended the maid,
If Delia my humble monition refuse,
Green Willow, the next time she visits thy shade,
Fan gently her bosom, and plead my excuse.

And thou, stony Grot, on thy arch mayst preserve
Two lingering drops of the night-fallen dew,
And let 'em just fall at her feet, and they'll serve
As tears of my Sorrow entrusted to you;

Or lest they unheeded should fall at her feet,
Let 'em light on her bosom of snow, and I swear
The next time she visits thy moss-covered seat,
I'll pay thee each drop with a genuine tear.

So mayst thou, Green Willow, for ever thus toss
Thy branches so lank o'er the still-running stream,
And thou, stony Grotto, retain all thy moss,
While yet there's a Lover to make thee his theme:

Or more, may my Delia still give you her charms,
Each Evening, sometimes the whole Evening long,
Then, Grotto, for hours support her white arms,
Then, Willow, wave all thy green tops to her Song.

* * * * *

True, true, silly leaves; so she did, I allow,
But I tell you no token of rage could I see;
She frowned, but reflection had clouded her brow,
She sighed, but perhaps 'twas in pity to me.

Then wave thy leaves brisker, thou Willow of woe,
I tell thee, no token of rage could I see;
No, no—I will never believe it was so,
She was not, she could not be angry with me.

For well did she know that my Heart meant no wrong,
It sank at the thought but of giving her pain,
And trusted its cause to a faltering tongue
That erred from the feelings it could not explain."

"I will call you Horatio," cried the lady of his heart on receiving these very verses an hour before midnight; "that was the name you gave yourself in that sweet poem. Write to me then, my dear Horatio, and tell me that you are equally sincere and constant. . . . My hand shakes so at this moment, I can scarce hold the pen. My father came into my room this moment, and I had just time to stuff the letter behind the glass.

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'Twas well he did not take much notice of me, for I was . . . Good-bye—God bless—I will . . ."

The same letter protests her passionate love for him in a passage already glanced at in a note: "Let me see, what have I more to say?—Nothing but the same dull story over and over again—that I love you to distraction, and that I would prefer you and beggary before any man with a throne."[1] Their correspondence, contrived under feigned names, was as jealously watched as the assignations, which took place not only by the damp grotto but also in friendly drawing-rooms.[2] Charles himself played watch-dog, and Miss Linley wrote that he "looked amazingly knowing. . . . Duce take his curious head. . . . Is it not amazing, my dear Love, that we should always have so great an inclination for what is not in our possession?" "Oh, my dearest love," she proceeds, "I am never happy but when I am with you. I cannot speak or think of anything else. When shall we have another happy half-hour? I declare I have not felt real joy since I came from France before this evening." Nor were their transports free from the chequered moods and outbursts of Sheridan's "Falkland" and "Julia."[3] "Oh, my love," she exclaims in one of the few letters outside the Sheridan Manuscripts,[4] "how vain are your doubts and suspicions; believe me, if I thought it possible for me to change my present sentiments for you, I shall despise myself. Never shall you have the least reason to suspect my constancy or my love." She too could be jealous, and an earlier missive of the same series shows us the reverse side of Cupid's medal: "Perhaps now, whilst I am writing and amusing myself by expressing the tender sentiments which I feel for you, you are

[1] She had before sent him verses, already cited, one line of which tallies with this sentiment, "With thee a cot would prove a Court."

[2] Of the Lynns, for example, and Roscoes.

[3] It is a mistake (shared by most biographers) to suppose that "Lydia" was copied from Miss Linley, who was the prototype of "Julia."

[4] Cf. Rae, Vol. I., pp. 189—196, to which we are indebted for these extracts. Rae errs, however, in supposing that a reference to "Lissy" is to Elizabeth Sheridan. It is to Alicia, and elsewhere in his pages this "Lissy" is mis-rendered "Sissy."

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flirting with Miss W[aller, the singer], or some other handsome girl, or making fine speeches to [illegible] scold. I do not believe any such thing, but give me leave to doubt that I may with greater pleasure be convinced to the contrary. No, my life and soul, I love you to such a degree, that I should never bear to see you (even in joak) show any particular attention to another. Judge then by my writing if I doubt your constancy."

These are not among the great love-letters of the world; nor have we Sheridan's replies, but they prove with what simple ardour Dulcinea worshipped her Quixote. She had not yet attained the style which enhances her after-correspondence. Her words were drawn from the novels of the day, but her spelling is at least no worse than the Duchess of Devonshire's; while there is pathos in her sentiment. In exposing to the modern gaze love-rhapsodies more than a century old, we feel like men revisiting the toy-cupboards of their childhood. As we peer wistfully, their darkness is mysterious no more. Some dust too rises in judgment against the tears that force themselves on our eyes. For there lies all the battered wreckage of our day-dreams, and we sadly recognise that our favourites were the bare foolish playthings which would now charm us no longer. Farewell, you fond and artless cheats that called up a whole world into our narrow room.

"Those old, old times have vanished,
As all things vanish must," [1]

and not least the faded symbols on the faded paper.

When she heard a rumour that after all they might soon be wedded, "Only think of this," she cries, "bright Hevn's(!)

[1] Heine's

"Vorbei sind die alten zeiten,
Und alles rollt vorbei,
Das Geld und die Welt und die Zeiten,
Und Glaube, und Lieb' und Treu."

"Those old, old times have vanished,
As all things vanish must;
The world with its honey and money
And faith and love and trust."

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God bless you, my dear, dear love. I am so weary, I must go to bed. There is but one thing that could keep me awake, and that is your company. Once more adieu. Upon my knees, half-nacked [*sic*], once more I am going to tire you with my nonsense. I could not bear to see this little blank without filling it up, tho' I do not know with what, as I have almost exhausted the Budget of news which I had colected since our long absence. I do insist that you write to me. You lazy wretch, can't you take so small a trouble? I can receive your letter by the same method. My sister is very impatient that I don't come into bed, but I feel more happiness in this situation, though I am half froze, than in the warmest bed in England." Let her dream on, the sweet singer in her girl's Elysium. How often in days to come had she to repeat "You lazy wretch, why can't you take so small a trouble?"

So summer came, and with it renewed impatience on the part of Mathews, chafing at Welsh dulness and smarting under the stigma of cowardice which Sheridan had affixed. He sent the young man insulting messages, he wrote him a scurrilous letter[1] and on a sudden he reappeared at Bath, an unwelcome interloper. He came, attended not by his uncle Knight, who had probably no wish to re-embroil himself, but by a certain William Barnett, a stranger to him, says Sheridan;[2] his recent neighbour, records Alicia, in Wales. Barnett is said to have urged Mathews to wipe out his disgrace by a fresh duel, and he charged himself with the management of the concern. He it was who bore the preliminary challenge, which he handed to Alicia under the pretext of its being an invitation for her brother.[3] Sheridan, however, was hard to

[1] Cf. Thomas Sheridan to R. Chamberlaine, "July 9, 1772." Sheridan MSS., cited by Moore, Vol. I., p. 203.

[2] In his manuscript comments on Barnett's narrative. Sheridan MSS., cited by Moore, Vol. I., pp. 93—99. Alicia calls him "Barnard," Sheridan with serene impartiality Bernet, Barnard, and Barnett.

[3] Cf. her narrative: "This gentleman Mr. Barnard accompanied him [Mathews] to Bath, and was the bearer of the Challenge which he had the cruelty to put into Miss Sheridan's hand, saying it was a note of invitation to her Brother."

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catch, as the following unpublished letter, found in a bundle, collected by Mrs. Norton, will show. Sheridan himself has indorsed its much-torn paper with "M.'s second on Kingsdown." The duel was finally arranged for the following morning.[1]

"MRS. WALSH'S, Tuesday Evening.
[*June* 30, 1772.]

"I had ere this hoped for the pleasure of seeing you. I find by the servant it is uncertain when you will be here. I have taken the liberty of handing this line to request the favour of you to let me know where I shall meet you this evening and when. If equally agreeable to you at the White Hart. As I am very tender on my feet the Stones are not very pleasant walking on. Pray excuse this scrap of paper, as it is what the servant gave me.

"From your most obedient Servant,
"W. BARNETT."

This missive however only preluded the actual challenge. Its object was to incense Sheridan again. On the evening of its receipt Barnett produced for his signature a "paper" drawn up by Mathews which contained his own version of their previous meeting. So far from signing, Sheridan indignantly rebutted it in a letter to Captain Knight,[2] and it was said both then and afterwards, that this rejection compelled the duel.[3]

[1] Wednesday, July the first. Cf. the *Bath Chronicle* of that day: "This morning about three o'clock, a second duel was fought with seconds between Capt. Mathews and Mr. R. Sheridan on Kingsdown in Bath," etc. Mr. Rae trips in thinking the date the "2nd" (cf. Vol. I., p. 200); while (among others) Alicia errs in saying "some time in June, 1772."

[2] Cf. Sheridan MSS. and Moore, Vol. I., p. 78. Sheridan's own statement at the beginning of his letter to Knight: "On the evening preceding my last meeting Mr. Barnett produced a paper to me written by Mr. Mathews, containing an account of our former meetings in London," etc.

[3] Cf. *Bath Chronicle*, July 8, 1772. "The last affair between Mr. Mathews and Mr. Sheridan was occasioned by Mr. S.'s refusal to sign a paper testifying the spirit and propriety of Mr. M.'s behaviour in their former rencounter. This refusal induced Mr. M. to send him a challenge." So too says Creevey in his recollection of a late conversation with Sheridan:

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The coast was clear ; old Sheridan busy in London, and equipping Charles for his Swedish journey, Miss Linley, who had resumed her round of professional engagements, away, a week earlier, to perform at Chester, Cambridge and Oxford. Her mind misgave her at the parting. "The anxiety I felt whilst in my dear Horatio's company to-night," she wrote on that Wednesday, "would not let me feel the pains of separation, but now that I am retired and at full liberty to give way to my own unpleasing ideas, I cannot describe what I feel to be so long divided from you. . . . I will try to forget every disagreeable circumstance and only look forward to those happy hours which I hope are still in store for us. With what rapture shall we meet when we may do so without constraint, when I may live in your arms without fear of parents or the ill-natured world. I could write to you without ever leaving off, but my sister insists on my coming to bed. It is now near one o'clock, and I am to be up by five to-morrow. Think of me while I am absent, and don't let any idea disturb your peace in regard to me, for while I live I can never cease to be your own Eliza." Already at Oxford, and on the day previous to Barnett's message,[1] she thus renewed her lover's complaint: "I have not been out since I came here. I shall be very happy when I am once more in Bath. I cannot tell how much I long to see you, to ask you a thousand questions. Oh, my dear Horatio, I have had many perplexing thoughts since I have been absent, but I will hope for the best. If I find you well and happy on my return, I shall be content. It is much if I am not with you as soon as this letter. Till then receive

". . . Accordingly a messenger arrived from him [Mathews] to Sheridan with a written certificate in favour of Mathews' undoubted honour in the former affair to be *signed* by Sheridan, or else the messenger was to deliver him a second challenge." Cf. Creevey Papers, Vol. I., p. 54. Mr. Green, who relies so much on newspaper evidence, does not mention the *Bath Chronicle's* testimony in this regard, which is borne out by Creevey's remembrance.

[1] The letter was dated "OXFORD, Monday, 12 o'clock." Mr. Rae is mistaken in saying "when Sheridan was accepting a challenge from Mathews to fight a second duel." Cf. Vol. I., p. 193.

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my tenderest affections, and let me find you constant as I left you. If my prayers are granted, I shall once more embrace my Horatio and convince him how sincerely I am his Eliza." Little did she dream of what shortly awaited her: this very letter must have been in Sheridan's pocket on that summer dawn when he sallied forth, wearing her miniature,[1] to face their enemy for the last time on Kingsdown Hill. He had communicated with her, with his father and his sisters.[2] These were all his preparations. That he was ready to lay down his life for her sake is shown not only by the event for which new evidence is forthcoming, but by a letter from him of the next month to his friend Thomas Grenville: "I hope you have seen her. . . . Tell me she is happy; if she is otherwise tell her to be so. O upon my soul it were the part of an angel to come down from Heaven to watch over her and reconcile her mind to peace. I wish dying could assure me of the power to come from Heaven to her with that happiness which I fear she will never know here. It is impious to say it, but I believe I should exchange a Robe of Glory for *her* Livery."[3]

The second duel gave rise to as much controversy and scandal as the first. It is a misfortune for Sheridan that so much in his life-crises should have been double-edged and dubious. His character was the reason. He did not attempt his ventures in the common way. He liked to mature strokes of finesse, to forestall and astonish. In this case doubt is heightened by circumstance. He was a very young man, and his antagonist was a seasoned fencer. Moreover, an accurate recollection of duels is especially difficult even for eyewitnesses. Such encounters are swift and sudden, and the sequence of things has to be detached afterwards from a series of movements

[1] For this detail cf. his own account in a letter of 1792 in the correspondence with the Duchess of Devonshire and her sister, Lady Bessborough, given in the Appendix to the second volume.

[2] Alicia's account.

[3] Sheridan to T. Grenville, "FARM HILL, WALTHAM ABBEY, 30th August, 1772." Transcribed by Rae, Vol. I., pp. 217 *et seq.*

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that seem simultaneous to an onlooker. In such matters the chief actors, even with the best intentions, can scarcely hope to be correct and are seldom unbiased. In the first duel Mathews's account is missing, in the second, Sheridan's version is not presented by any complete document, while Mathews's story is told by his second as a connected whole. The main points, however, are traceable. A letter from Sheridan's father, and other *ex parte* statements, add some important details which the recital of his antagonist's second omits. There is not the least reason to doubt Barnett's veracity, but it should be remembered that Sheridan's answer is a fragment, and that though his own second, Paumier, sanctioned the Barnett narrative, he did so under threats from Mathews, and Mathews was quite capable of compelling evidence by questionable means.[1]

The first-hand sources, outside Alicia's chronicle, for this second duel are enumerated hereunder;[2] they comprise one autograph authority entirely new. And to these documents and the wonted newspaper babble should be added some recollections which Creevey heard from Sheridan at Brighton

[1] Cf. Sheridan to Grenville [from Waltham Abbey], December 8, 1772, cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 242.

[2] (1) An account afterwards prepared for Wade, the master of ceremonies, by Barnett and sanctioned by Sheridan's second, Captain Paumier. It should be especially noticed, however, that no sooner did Sheridan hear of it than he distinctly told Thomas Grenville that Paumier's assent to this document was extorted from him by Mathews's threats and falsity. It was sent to Sheridan by W. Brereton on October 24, 1772, is among the Sheridan Manuscripts, and is cited by Moore (Vol. I., p. 88), but omitted by Rae.

(2) Sheridan's fragment of a reply to Barnett (in part illegible), also among the Sheridan Manuscripts, also cited by Moore (Vol. I., p. 93) and also omitted by Rae. It is to be regretted that this version by Sheridan is not entire.

(3) The letters of Thomas Sheridan to Richard Chamberlaine, July 9, 1772, and of his son Charles to Dick Sheridan, July 3, 1772, both from London, both among the Sheridan Manuscripts, and both transcribed by Rae alone (Vol. I., pp. 202—205).

(4) Some stray allusions in Miss Linley's letters, a later letter of Sheridan to his father, and Sheridan's correspondence with Thomas Grenville, who

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so late as 1805, but which, though vouched for as correct, exhibit some glaring blunders.[1] There are allusions also in Angelo's "Reminiscences," like the last, not wholly accurate, but trustworthy in the main, since Angelo stayed with the Sheridans before Richard was himself again.

Alicia must have been frightened indeed when she discovered the point of Barnett's missive. She never suspected that her brother could once more expose himself to his enemy's malice. The game in his family's opinion was not worth the candle. "You risked everything," his brother Charles was to write, "where you had nothing to gain, to give your antagonist the thing he wished, a chance for recovering his reputation, . . . he wanted to get rid of the contemptible opinion he was held in, and you were good-natured enough to let him do it at your expense."

The courage of both was screwed to the sticking point, each felt frantic with the other, and the struggle was meant to be desperate. Of this there can be no doubt. Long afterwards Sheridan, passing the spot in sad attendance on his dying wife, told the Duchess of Devonshire of the hut where, when all was over, he crept for refuge and gave himself up for dead, adding that his life had been "strangely saved."[2] Even the "Octogenarian's" gossiping page styles the fight one unparalleled for "intense animosity." A tattling newspaper, nigh a quarter of a year afterwards, also recorded that the struggle was for life or death, though it introduces an agreement between the combatants that neither of their seconds should interfere.[3] Of such

was at Oxford when Miss Linley sang there, and directly afterwards with Sheridan at Bath. These letters are transcribed by Rae.

And (5) last, but not least, a letter from Sheridan to the Duchess of Devonshire and her sister, which contains some most interesting memories of the event, and forms part of the new correspondence of 1792, transcribed at the end of this work.

[1] Cf. Creevey, Vol. I., pp. 53—57.

[2] Cf. App. to Vol. II., "Letters from Sheridan to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and to Lady Bessborough."

[3] Cf. *The Craftsman* for October 10, 1772. Mr. Green makes the most of this item.

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a compact, however, no evidence on either side remains. Mathews's recital is silent, so is Sheridan's, and with his former experience, the younger man would be most unlikely to assent to any such arrangement, for the very presence of seconds was for the purpose of ensuring fair play. Moreover, the circumstances of the two encounters differed. The first duel had been marred by a second's ill-timed intervention, and this fiercer struggle might well, and eventually did, require a timely interference. Sheridan, who had resented Captain Knight's interposal on the first occasion, on this, blamed both seconds for their apathy at a critical moment. On the whole, this unsupported authority for a previous understanding does not carry conviction, but looks more like an attempt by Mathews to justify the aloofness of seconds who were afterwards generally condemned. One amusing fact in this regard must conclude our preface. When Townshend visited Bath to elicit the facts not long before Mathews died, that worthy affected to make light of the tussle, and said that Sheridan's wounds were claret.[1]

About three o'clock in the morning of July the first, Sheridan, accompanied by Captain Paumier, a young and inexperienced officer, met Mathews and Barnett at the White Hart Inn, whence they drove to the lovely Kingsdown, which had the disadvantage of affording very uneven ground. They drove in post-chaises that awaited the issue of the conflict. Mathews, remembering their last encounter, desired the arms to be pistols, whereas Sheridan insisted on swords before reaching the down.[2] His brother afterwards singled out this choice of rapiers as sheer folly, and it was certainly not in Sheridan's favour, for, though Angelo's pupil, he was no match, says Angelo's son, for one "who had learnt fencing in France, and was considered very skilful in the science."[3] The reason that Mathews gave

[1] Cf. Moore's "Journal." Sheridan, however, in his letter to Lady Bessborough and the Duchess of Devonshire (given in the Appendix to our second volume), expressly says that the stonecutter who inhabited the hut earned a living by showing the blood.

[2] Sheridan's letter to Barnett. Moore, Vol. I., p. 96.

[3] Cf. Angelo's "Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 417.

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for his preference was that he feared a repetition of the former "ungentlemanlike scuffle" of the first encounter, and to this Sheridan retorted that had he known at the prior meeting what his opponent's theory of a *gentlemanlike* scuffle was, he would certainly have put the chance out of his power. The seconds brought pistols with them, and the preliminaries of the duel were partly occupied in a dispute as to whether they should be used.

Mathews drew first. He subsequently alleged that Sheridan, declining these weapons, flourished his sword, advanced "in a vaunting manner," and called on him to draw. This Sheridan denied, but in no case is the matter of consequence. After some three passes with alternate advances and returns, they closed. Sheridan repeated his previous manœuvre, charged Mathews and endeavoured to lay hold of his sword. Mathews received him on its point, and in the *mêlée* his sword snapped. This happened, said Mathews, through a thrust on one of Sheridan's "ribs" or "breast-bone"; but Sheridan seems right in arguing against the possibility of such a lunge if his antagonist, as all agreed, received him "on his point." Moreover, Sheridan received no hurt in that region, nor was it controverted that he was twice wounded before his sword shivered.[1] Upon this Mathews, clutching Sheridan's sword-arm, tripped up his heels, and they both fell.[2] At first Sheridan had the advantage and seems to have bent his sword by thrusting at Mathews, but as they rolled on the sloping ground, the older and stronger found himself uppermost[3] hitting Sheridan's face

[1] "Gave him *another* wound," says Barnett, when he describes how Mathews's sword broke. Creevey's recollection of Sheridan's conversation inverts the process as detailed in the documents above enumerated: "*Sheridan's* sword broke in a point-blank thrust into *Mathews'* chest. Upon this he closed, and they both fell, Mathews uppermost; but in falling his sword broke likewise. . . ." Alicia's account, old Sheridan's letter, and the *St. James' Chronicle* of July 4 ("Bath Letter") make out that the swords of both antagonists broke simultaneously. This would be natural in unconsidered narratives which simplify details.

[2] Mathews's account contained in the recital of Barnett, his second.

[3] Cf. Sheridan's father's account, combined with Alicia's. Mathews's describes himself as uppermost from the first, and so does Creevey's gossiping account of Sheridan's recollection; but it is clear that old

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with the hilt and hacking at his neck with the six or seven inches of his broken blade, which eventually stuck in the earth.[1] He then laid hold of it and wounded his antagonist, who complained that he had now no weapon of defence. Upon this (states old Sheridan) Mathews held the point over his son, and ordered him to beg his life.[2] The youth indignantly refused, and managing to disengage his bent sword from his adversary's grasp, lunged at and slightly wounded his belly. And now came the crisis. Sheridan's sword broke in its turn, snapping "within four inches of the hilt,"[3] and it broke, if Creevey is to be trusted, against some hidden armour with which Mathews had protected himself—a fact which afterwards caused the father to institute proceedings before the mayor of Bristol. However this may have been, the disarmed Sheridan raised his right hand both in token of his plight and as a means of defence. It was dreadfully cut, yet all the time he gripped hold of his own scabbard, which his enemy retained.[4] Mathews had now two weapons, Sheridan none, and it was time for the seconds to interpose. Barnett, by his own account, had already wished to intervene, though Alicia declares that it was the panic-stricken Paumier who tried to interpose, and Barnett who refused his assent.[5] But Mathews had suddenly

Sheridan's supplementary detail, in no way favouring his son, fills up more than one gap in the struggle. Mathews' account postdates the bending of Sheridan's sword, while it is possible that neither the hacking of the neck nor Mathews' demand that Sheridan should beg his life were repeated as they appear in our text. But a close comparison of all the documents makes it probable that things happened in the order here described.

[1] According to Creevey, but Mathews' account says "on the ground." Barnett states that the "remaining part" of Mathews' sword was "broad and blunt," but old Sheridan describes it as "jagged" and "pointed."

[2] According to the other accounts Mathews only called on Sheridan to beg his life later on, when Sheridan's own sword broke. But both Sheridan's father and Barnett state that the sword was first bent.

[3] So Sheridan's father, supported by Creevey's account of his conversation long afterwards with Sheridan.

[4] This is the effect of Sheridan senior's account.

[5] According to the Barnett-Mathews account Paumier cried out when

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drawn his own jagged weapon from the earth,[1] and partly with it, partly with Sheridan's (says his father), began to stab him ferociously no less than twenty or thirty times,[2] while his oaths and curses were horrible to hear. Not more, however, than five of the thrusts took effect. And these were chiefly flesh wounds in the neck, for Sheridan managed to ward off the rest with his hand, so that they only penetrated his coat. One of these or the previous ones must have been violent, for it shattered the frame of Miss Linley's picture, which was found in a pool of blood, together with one of Sheridan's sleeve-buttons;[3] while another wound, by Barnett's own showing, injured the stomach. The affray was unequal, and at length the seconds realised that something must be done. Barnett saw Mathews "drawing the point out of the wound." "By this time," he proceeds, "Mr. Sheridan's sword was broke, which he told us. Captain Paumier called out to him, 'My dear Sheridan, beg your life, and I will be yours for ever.' I also desired him to ask his life: he replied, 'No, by God I won't.'[4] I then told Captain Paumier it would not do to wait

Sheridan received "a slight wound in the left part of his belly," "Oh, he's killed, he's killed." Sheridan afterwards expressed strong disapproval of Paumier's subsequent conduct to Grenville.

[1] Creevey's account.

[2] Such is old Sheridan's account, which may well exaggerate the number of the wounds. In this regard all the records differ, but Sheridan took a full week to recover from his injuries. The *Bath Chronicle* of July 2 says, "three or four wounds in his breast and side, and now he's very ill." Alicia says, "stabbed him repeatedly in the body and the face." Angelo, who stayed with the Sheridans while Dick was recovering, records that he showed him "a wound in his neck which he had received from his antagonist on the ground" (cf. "Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 417). Alicia says, "Mathews then renewed his attack, and, having picked up the point of *one of the swords*, ran it through the side of his antagonist's *throat*, and pinned him to the ground with it."

[3] Cf. App., Vol. II., 4 (*i*). The man who cut a memorial stone used to show, besides the swords, "a sleeve-button of mine and the setting of her Picture which was broke on my neck and placed where he found the blood."

[4] "I will neither beg it nor receive it from such a villian" (*sic*), says Alicia; "from such a scoundrel," says their father.

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for those punctilios (or words to that effect) and desired he would assist me in taking them up. Mr. Mathews most readily acquiesced first, desiring me to see that Mr. Sheridan was disarmed. I desired him to give me the tuck [*i.e.*, rapier], which he readily did, as did Mr. Sheridan, the broken part of his sword. Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Mathews both got up, the former was helped into one of the chaises, and drove off for Bath, and Mr. Mathews made the best of his way to London." "I have done for him," were his last words, enhanced by an imprecation.[1] Not Paumier, but one of the postillions, lifted Sheridan into the carriage. Mathews made his way to the coast, for he had arranged an escape to France till the affair should be forgotten. Of poor Mrs. Mathews not a word.

Barnett errs in supposing that Sheridan at once rattled off in his carriage. Faint and exhausted, he believed that his last hour had come. He crept into a peasant's hut and begged for some water. In this retreat he must have remained for some little time. Long afterwards he told the Duchess of Devonshire and her sister that, giving himself up for dead, he made many resolves in the event of recovery. The man who thus sheltered him marked the site with a memorial stone, and used to earn a living by showing off the salvage of the contest, the button, the swords, and the battered frame of Miss Linley's miniature.[2] The stubborn conflict long remained a sensation. When at last Sheridan entered the chaise he was driven straight to the White Hart Inn.

Both the seconds were censured for their strange behaviour, "cut for ever afterwards," says Creevey, for what his memory may be worth. Henry Angelo, soon afterwards visiting the Sheridans, records that Sheridan remarked of his own second, Captain Paumier, that he "absconded."[3] The whole affair is hard to disentangle, but, apart from disputable points, some facts are certain. Sheridan, as in the first encounter, was

[1] Alicia's additions.

[2] Cf. Sheridan's letter of 1792, given in the Appendix to Vol. II., 4 (i).

[3] Angelo's "Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 417.

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inexperienced, and he was pitted against a knowing adversary. There was no lack of courage on either side. Both swords were broken, Sheridan's irretrievably; and Mathews, with the point of his, hacked savagely at his adversary, who was seriously wounded. Sheridan had the disadvantage, yet he disdained to beg his life. It was a *mêlée* rather than a duel, and technically it ended in Mathews's favour. Mathews, however, was generally regarded as a would-be assassin. "Were he to appear in the streets of Bath to-day," wrote old Sheridan a week afterwards, "he would be stoned to death by the populace. If ever he should show his head here again, he will be shunned as one infected by the plague." Yet time, the great healer, proved efficacious, and at Bath Mathews died, whist-playing and popular, some fifty years onwards.

But who shall decide the precise order or number of thrust and parry while the two combatants lay rolling on the ground? Did Sheridan deprive Mathews of the chance of pistols? Possibly he did. Was he justified in again striving to seize his opponent's sword? Probably he was not. How were the swords broken? Was Sheridan called upon to beg his life more than once? Did Mathews wear armour? Did he strike his disarmed opponent with both swords, and, if so, why does Barnett (among others) omit the incident? Was it the weak Paumier who stood aloof when his principal was defenceless, or Mathews's cool second who prevented interference? These are points which can never be wholly decided. At least, and for the first time, the joint effect of conflicting material has been ordered and presented.

At the White Hart Sheridan's wounds were dressed by Lee and Ditcher, the best surgeons in Bath, and after a day he could be removed to his home, where, as he smiled at the inventions of the journals and conned the long page of varying scandal, he sketched the first project of his great comedy and mused on that "Ode to Scandal" which finds a place in this volume. The bad news travelled quickly. Alicia must have communicated it to Charles, who broke it to their father, naturally indignant at this second thunderbolt, though, not a

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week later, his son's popularity mollified him. It will be remembered that he and Charles were still occupied in London. Charles naturally resented the whole transaction. He wrote a letter to his brother, some passages of which are highly characteristic of himself as the good and of Dick as the bad apprentice, while they also are enlightening in relation to "The School for Scandal." Prim and prudent, Charles rightly deemed the duel superfluous; he would "suspend judgment" till "better informed." But with regard to money, for which Dick had asked him, he was in no suspense whatever. The duellist's paraphernalia had landed others in expense; he had drawn on both of the Ewarts—in the elder's case, with Linley's warranty for repayment. A little vile dross (of other people's) never impeded his careless and complicated finances. Charles may be pardoned for not jumping at generosity on the eve of a long and important journey. "I am exceedingly unhappy," he tells him, "at the situation I leave you in with respect to money matters, the more so as it is totally out of my power to be of any use to you." "I am sure I wish," said Joseph Surface to old Stanley, "that I had it in my power to offer you even a *small* relief." "Ewart," Charles resumes, "was greatly vexed at the manner of your drawing for the last £20—I own, I think, with some reason. As to old Ewart, what you were talking about is absolutely impossible; he is already surprised at Mr. Linley's long delay, and indeed I think the latter much to blame in this respect. . . . I must therefore conclude with wishing you speedily restored to health, and that if I could make your purse as whole as that will shortly be, I hope, it would make me extremely happy." "You leave me deeply affected," wept Joseph, after withholding assistance, in "The School for Scandal": "William, be ready to open the door." Dick behaved differently to Charles. Ten years later, when he was in office, that brother wrote to beg an emolument, and in that very letter excused himself for non-payment of the money which he, the flourishing, had borrowed from him, the impecunious. The cause of that loan was even yet more

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Surfaceish: "This damned annuity to my uncle plays the devil with me."[1]

The gazettes soon reached Oxford, where Miss Linley was performing. Her father carefully concealed the news, for he well knew that its disclosure would incapacitate her from singing. Thomas Grenville, then an undergraduate, told Alicia, whom he met soon afterwards at Bath, how deeply affected he and all of them were as they hung on her tones, which one word of the tidings would have stopped, and looked on the fair form which they knew it would have prostrated. Before Sheridan was well, the Linleys returned home, and here his sister may take up the tale: "Within a few miles of that place the party were met by Mr. Panton, a clergyman and a friend of the family. This Gentleman proposed her quitting her Father's chaise and accompanying him the rest of the way. He then in the most cautious manner informed her of what had passed, but all these precautions were not sufficient to prevent her being dreadfully affected by the stroke, and during her agitation she insisted on being admitted to see him, declaring she was his Wife, and as such entitled to attend on him. But this could not be complied with, as Mr. Sheridan's father had now returned from London, and was so grieved and incensed at his son's second duel, that he even refused to see him on his arrival, and strictly forbade all intercourse between his daughters and the Linley family. The youngest, however [Elizabeth], contrived to convey some intelligence to her Brother when she perceived how unhappy he was on that subject. In the course of a few days Mr. Sheridan was prevailed on to see his Son, and all displeasure seemed over." Alicia herself has told us that she it was who reconciled them.

But Sheridan had strong advocates beyond his family circle. Young Angelo arrived, fresh from Eton, and he was a prime favourite of old Sheridan. Thomas Grenville came down

[1] C. F. Sheridan to R. B. Sheridan, March 27, 1782, Sheridan MSS. and Moore, Vol. I., pp. 370—373. This letter has already been twice cited in other connections. The uncle was Richard Chamberlaine. Years afterwards, as has been noted, Charles was found behaving in the same manner to his aunt, his father, and later to his sister.

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from Oxford with his brother and their tutor, Cleaves, to take up his abode with the master, who hoped to cure that brother of his stammer. Sheridan's father delighted in his pupils, and Thomas Grenville became Dick's greatest friend.[1] After an explosion, the head of the household was quite prepared to forgive, but Miss Linley's tell-tale tongue proved an obstacle. "Through some of his Friends," proceeds Alicia, "R. B. Sheridan found out that Miss Linley's assertion of her marriage had answered no end but suggesting the idea to both Fathers of breaking the match, Mr. Linley to secure to himself the advantage of her talents, and Mr. Sheridan from a high spirit of honour, which made him very averse to his son's forming a connection with a Person whose name had been so much the subject of public discussion. . . . Many traps were laid for both parties, but they contrived to evade them, attributing what she had uttered before Mr. Panton and others to mere agitation of mind."

What Alicia here says regarding the clandestine "wedding" supports our view of its unbinding character. Had it been a real marriage, no fathers could have dreamed of "breaking off the match," while had it been a profligate's trap, neither of them would ever have spoken to Sheridan again. Alicia is certainly to be trusted in this respect beyond all others, for she was the depositary and forwarder of all their schemes, and could not have forgotten their meaning when, forty-four years afterwards, she compiled her chronicle. Her statement that Miss Linley had blurted out some avowal of this union is confirmed by her own words in a letter shortly to be cited.

But love laughs at locksmiths, and of course the fathers were defied. "Can you recollect nothing of your little Adventures of cruel Fathers?" etc., etc., wrote her sister Polly, bantering the

[1] The Angelos and Grenvilles stayed together with the Sheridans. For the first instance cf. Angelo's "Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 417. That the future Marquis of Buckingham came to old Sheridan to be cured of stuttering we learn not only from Angelo (cf. *ibid.*, p. 418), but also from one of Betsy Sheridan's letters to her sister. Cf. LeFanu MSS. In connection with this visit Angelo tells us that Dick then first introduced him to Gainsborough.

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then Mrs. Sheridan, twelve years later.[1] Young Paumier—a trustworthy messenger, said "Eliza"—carried those tender billets to Sheridan's bedside. And now it was that he must have soothed her with that caressing refrain:—

"Ask'st thou how long my love will stay,
When all that's new is past?
How long, ah Delia, can I say
How long my life will last?
Dry be that tear, be hushed that sigh,
At least I'll love thee till I die!
Hushed be that sigh,"

and now that she must have answered it by the already-quoted refrain of:—

"Blest if my sighs and tears but prove
The winds and waves that waft to love."

Hard facts, however, broke the spell. The ruthless Linley reclaimed her, and she was ordered to join him and her aunt at Wells next morning. But now that her lover was safe, she could even rejoice. "I cannot resist the opportunity of thanking my dearest Horatio," she writes, "for his concern for me. Believe me, I have not been in my senses for two days, but the happy account of your recovery has perfectly restored them. Oh! my dearest love, when shall I see you? I will not ask you to write, as I am sure it must hurt you.[2] . . . Oh! my Horatio, I did not know till now how much I loved you. Believe me, had you died I should certainly [have] dressed myself as a man and challenged Mathews. He should have killed me, or I would have revenged you and myself. . . . I will not write again till I hear from you at Wells, as I do not know how to direct safely. God in Heaven bless you, my dearest Horatio, and restore you once more to health, to happiness, and the arms of your Eliza."[3] From Wells she wrote again, unhappy at his silence. Her mother informed her of fresh trouble brewing at home. The fathers were in "serious".

[1] In a letter of 1784. Sheridan MSS., Tickell Corr.
[2] This proves the wound on the hand.
[3] Transcribed in full by Rae, Vol. I., p. 207.

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conclave, and Linley murmured against old Sheridan. She had heard, too, of a note that Dick had addressed to him whom he hoped to call father-in-law—one, presumably, promising not to claim Long's money in the event of his marriage.[1] "But he says that it is of no use to him, as you are under age, and he does not suppose it will be [in] your power to keep your word. . . . It is strongly reported that we [are married], and that I discovered it in my fright when I first heard of your duel. Then there is a long lecture with hopes that it is not true and that I will convince the world that I have more spirit and prudence." "For God's sake," she said, "write to me." She was "tortured with ten thousand apprehensions." If she does not hear by the next post, she will begin to think that her happiness is no longer dear to him; and in this cold fit of suspicion she subscribes herself his "sincere" Eliza. Thus, Julia to her Falkland, who, in his turn, tortured himself. After his recovery,[2] and on her return from Wells, she thus allayed the convalescent's misgivings,[3] "How can you, my dear Horatio, torment yourself and me with such unjust suspicions? My behaviour last night proceeded from the anxiety I felt on perceiving you look so remarkably grave. If I was prudent, it was my father's conversation that made me so. He declared he would sooner follow me to the grave than see me married to you, as you would ruin me and yourself in a short time by your extravagance. I know he watched us last night; 'twas that which made me cautious. If I said anything in my note to offend you, impute it to my desire to have you esteemed by your father. You cannot have any doubts in regard to R——. Believe me I have wrote to him to put an end to every future hope. I never can think of another. I do not know how to see you. My situation at present is very disagreeable. I am not

[1] The inference is Rae's, and, with qualifications to appear hereafter, the writer agrees with it.

[2] The *Bath Chronicle* of July 8 announced that the surgeons declared him "out of danger." Mr. Rae makes a trifling mistake in citing the issue as of the 9th.

[3] Her mention of "Mr. R——" will be borne in mind as a confirmation of the genuineness of the disputed document which has been so fully discussed.

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suffered to go out without my father or mother, and I am so watched that I can scarce find a moment to write. We must have patience. . . ."

The position is plain. They were to meet as mere acquaintances. We know that Linley shortly afterwards exacted a promise from his daughter never to marry Sheridan, while Sheridan senior bound his son not even to correspond with her. An embargo had been laid on rhapsodies and raptures, and "oaths equivocal" were soon the result. Eliza went under surveillance; but not the bodyguard of the Hyrcanian tiger, or the dragon of the Hesperides, could keep the lover from that golden fruit. Old Sheridan, thundering against the "assassin" Mathews, ransacked Bath for affidavits to indict him for attempted murder. But his son refused to join. He would be no party to the public profanation of Miss Linley's name.[1] Then followed a fresh engagement for the actor at the Dublin Theatre Royal, and all his family forsooth must be dragged with him; Sir Anthony himself could not be more absolute. Eliza harbours "horrid thoughts" of her Dick's "going to Dublin." It is Tuesday midnight when she takes up her hasty pen; it is always midnight when Juliet pours out her seared heart to Romeo. "How beautiful at this moment does that bright moon appear!" she soliloquises. "Yes, my Horatio, it was conscious that thy Eliza's thoughts were wholly fixed on thee, nor can any other idea remove thy loved remembrance from my heart. I feel I love you every day more tenderly; I cannot support the idea of a separation. . . . Oh, my loved Horatio, what will then become of your Eliza?" He had fancied that she was betraying their secret; Lissy had dropped hints. A "Miss C.," too (of whom we shall hear again), had been quizzing Sheridan about his tender relationship. "Indeed, my love," writes the affianced heroine, "if you believe her, you will hurt me very much, as I give you my word and honour I never gave her the least reason to think that you was of the least consequence with me more than as a friend. . . . I assure you I never have nor ever will make a confidante of anyone; be easy

[1] Alicia's narrative.

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then, my dearest love, on that head, as I am resolved for once to convince you that I can keep a secret."[1] The Indian proverb says that a secret on a woman's lips resembles a dewdrop on a flower. Did Eliza tell no one, no, not by hints or blushes, that young Sheridan was half her husband?

Then suddenly old Sheridan changed his mind again. He was sick to death, perhaps, of those Linleys. His daughters should find an asylum with their old friends at St. Quentin, and the incorrigible Dick should attend them across the Channel. The actor's plans shifted with his tempers, and he changed once more. The incorrigible Dick should *not* go. He was "unworthy of such a charge, unworthy, Sir, to prove a guardian to his young and virtuous sisters. By heavens, Sir, he has played me false, has broken a solemn promise, and there's no trusting the double-dyed villain." So much can be guessed from Alicia's bald recital, and many an after-diatribe. Something must surely have intervened. Dick's meetings and letters and poems and protestations may have been discovered, or was it Eliza's unguarded moments that brought down the paternal vengeance? Did Richard exclaim, like Captain Absolute, "To what fine purpose have I been plotting! A noble reward for all my schemes, upon my soul! A little gipsy! I did not think her romance could have made her so damned absurd, either. 'Sdeath, I never was in a worse humour in my life! I could cut my own throat or any other person's with the greatest pleasure in the world"? Did he protest to his father, "Sir, you see a penitent before you," and did old Positive answer in Sir Anthony's language, "I see an impudent scoundrel before me"? Some of "The Rivals" certainly reads very like this interval.

In any case Dick Sheridan was proscribed and excommunicated. He should go to the Bar; he should repent in sackcloth and ashes. He should swear to write to her no more, scarcely to speak of her, much less speak to her. Exile should be his portion. The decree was peremptory. He was banished to a farm near Waltham Abbey, in distant Essex, under the charge

[1] Rae, Vol. I., p. 211.

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of their respected friends the Parkers—far from his goddess, far from his sisters. "Let him study and reflect. Let him be punished, Sir." He might yet do credit to a family that could boast a Charles. Meanwhile the irate parent set off to toil alone for them all in Ireland. Surely he deserves a better fate, this testy but "unsubduable old Roman," as Carlyle termed Landor. As for Dick, his mood is best described by "Dr. Rosy's" words in his own "St. Patrick's Day," words urged possibly by recollection: "Ah, I warrant he is full of hope and fear, doubt and anxiety. Truly he has the fever of love strong upon him: faint, peevish, languishing all day, with burning, restless nights." And his distraught Eliza, what of her, pining in bondage? She must trill and smile before the crowd, but her heart is heavy with regrets and forebodings. Surely Horatio will not play her false, and yet if he does—and they mutter things—there are still worthy and wealthy suitors—her mother's cargo—in her wake. But no! she knows herself and her Horatio better. They were born for each other. They will break those oaths wrung from them by jealous fear, they will be true to the vows of their elopement:—

"At lovers' perjuries they say Jove laughs."

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CHAPTER VI

RECESSIONAL

(From Sheridan's retirement at the end of August, 1772, to his marriage and honeymoon in April and May, 1773.)

"This treasured grief, this loved despair,
My lot for ever be,
But, dearest, may the pangs I bear
Be never known to thee."
SHERIDAN *to Miss Linley* (*Autumn*, 1772).

"Journeys end in lovers' meeting."
SHAKESPEARE, "*Twelfth Night*."

THE lights and shades of Sheridan's moods as he sat on his stool of repentance at Farm Hill, Waltham Abbey, are mirrored in his coming correspondence with his young friend Thomas Grenville. He was passionately despairing. He had solemnly pledged himself to be quit of Miss Linley, though he loved her to distraction, but, at the last, he shrank from apprising her that the severance must be final. Indeed, all along he hoped for the renewal of their tie. She on her side, torn by the conflict between hard duty to inflexible parents and intense devotion to the man of her choice, never realised that the rupture could be permanent; all that she knew was that both of them must never correspond.[1] "If you love me," she

[1] "I have received a letter from her . . . (contraband!) filled with the violence of affection, and concluded with prayers, commands, and entreaties that I should write to her. *I did not expect such a desire, as she had acquiesced to my determination of not corresponding*." Sheridan to Grenville [September ?], 1772, transcribed by Rae, Vol. I., p. 227. It has been forgotten that the promise was reciprocal. Sheridan adds, "Indeed, as we had always other subjects to employ us when together, she hesitated less in agreeing to a distant mortification, *and I by that had less necessity to explain properly to her the necessity of it*." Were he to *write* now, he would violate his promise; but both of them chose to interpret their promise literally, and he soon found other channels of communication.

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sighed, "and will be always constant in every situation, I will yet be at peace," and her last words to him had been from "Hamlet"—"One woe doth tread upon another's heel: so fast they follow."[1] It was a situation, for each, perplexing and perilous. Reason and prudence contradicted feeling, and with Sheridan, emotion would certainly outweigh discretion. With Miss Linley, a wounded heart defied the world, and that wicked world, from which Sheridan had shielded her, was again besmirching her name. "Why was her fate so cruel," wrote Grenville (still at Bath at the beginning of September), "as so early in life to bring upon her the imputation and censure of the world?" while to him he had written, "How unfortunately are you situated! How many tedious hours must you pass in contemplating in idea only those virtues which, by your account, would give the most complete happiness!" Sheridan had frankly unbosomed himself to his friend: "I have passed two days here," he told him, "in excessive melancholy; and I am perfectly convinced that that unfortunate being called a lover, if a true one, could better bear a separation from her he loves in a desert than a paradise. Place me in the first, and I am surrounded with one plain, absolute, and evident wretchedness. There is no image round me to remind me of *her*, none which I can join with *her* idea: nay, by Heaven, I should feel supremely happy that she was not there to partake of my hardships. But in the other, when I see a pair blest in peace and in each other, let me say 'Why am I shut out from this for ever?' and 'tis torture. Let me sit in a beautiful scene, I exclaim 'What would her presence make this?' and 'tis worse than a wilderness. Let me hear music and singing, 'I cannot hear her sing and play,' and the notes become the shrieks of the damned. In short, with my present feelings I cannot find a place either so perfect or so abominable as not to admit the idea of this torturing comparative improvement."[2] He was thrown in upon

[1] Miss Linley to R. B. Sheridan, "Tuesday night, 12 o'clock." Sheridan MSS., Vol. I., p. 211. "Hamlet," Act iv, Sc. VII.

[2] Sheridan from Waltham Abbey to Thomas Grenville, August 30, 1772, transcribed by Rae, Vol. I., p. 219. The previous extract is out of a letter

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himself; loneliness and melancholy, "friend to grief," companioned him,[1] but memory was his comfort. "Believe me," he confesses, "when I am most melancholy, when I am poring over Nature's large volume of affliction, I turn to the page of love (though a blotted one) for consolation. I find there, it is true, much cause for vexation, but were it a blank to me, I should be ten times more miserable."[2] Over and over again he stretches out imploring hands towards Miss Linley, who, like the wraith in Æneas' vision, eludes his embrace and recedes into thin air. "Ask the fond youth," he quotes from Shakespeare in this connection, and in one of these letters,

> "Ask the fond youth
> Why the cold urn of her whom long he loved
> So often fills his arms."[3]

And here a song from "The Duenna" comes once more to our aid:—

> "Could I her faults remember,
> Forgetting every charm,
> Soon would impartial reason
> The tyrant love disarm;
> But when enraged I number
> Each failing of her mind,
> Love still suggests her beauty,
> And sees—while Reason's blind."

Another lyric, too, inspired by his unhappy passion, and published many years later, pertains to this period. A quatrain of it, set to music by the Duchess of Devonshire, and introduced with variations into the play of "The Stranger," was to bring on Sheridan the reproach of plagiarism—from himself.[4]

from Thomas Grenville at Bath to Sheridan, September 4, 1772. Sheridan MSS. and Rae, Vol. I., p. 223.

[1] In a letter to his father only three days earlier he said, "I am very snugly situated in the Town, though I should have liked it better to have been out of it."

[2] Sheridan to T. Grenville [September?], 1772; Sheridan MSS. and Rae, Vol. I., p. 227.

[3] Sheridan to T. Grenville, January 4, 1773; Sheridan MSS. and Rae, Vol. I., p. 247.

[4] The last quatrain, cf. *ante*, p. 21. It appeared in the "Stranger" during 1798, but it was published, entire and in its original form, with music, in 1794.

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The whole is here copied from the original manuscript among his papers; nor can there be much doubt that Waltham Abbey was its birthplace. It is almost worthy of Lovelace, and it exhales the purity of his attachment:—

"Think not, my love, when secret grief
Preys on my saddened heart,
Think not I wish a mean relief
Or would from Sorrow part.
Dearly I prize the sighs sincere
That my true fondness prove,
Nor would I wish to check the tear
That flows from hapless love.

Alas! tho' doomed to hope in vain
The joys that love requite,
Yet will I cherish all its pain
With sad but dear delight.
This treasured grief, this loved despair,
My lot for ever be;
But, dearest, may the pangs I bear
Be never known to thee."

And "Eliza's" image, on which he incessantly brooded, must have seemed doubly pitiful, since both of them chafed against the fetters of a forced compact. A fresh strain from "The Duenna," redolent of Dryden, brings back this further phase of his feelings:—

"Soft pity never leaves the gentle breast
Where Love has been received a welcome guest;
As wandering saints poor huts have sacred made,
He hallows every heart he once has swayed:
And (when his presence we no longer share)
Still leaves compassion as a relic there."

"I am sick and without society," he wrote; "my love is almost the only feeling I have alive. *Amo, ergo sum*, is the confirmation of my existence: I *love*, therefore I *am*;" and so, as he again sighed to his confidant, "there is nothing for it but to sit down and write *Hymns to Patience*." In vain did Grenville prescribe "tranquillity of mind," that stock remedy of classical dispensaries, as useless to the sufferer as the hollow sentiments of Joseph Surface. "It ought," wrote

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Sheridan of equanimity, "to be to all a consideration as superior to bodily welfare as the soul is to the body. But I am afraid well-being, in a most essential degree, depends on the original construction of our frames. We may diet and exercise the one to its advantage; so may we cultivate and improve the other: we may proceed by rule to the body's health, but who can '[ad] minister to a mind diseased'? For my part I take what the world calls *philosophy* to be the arrantest quack of all. And that 'God never made His work for man to mend' is an observation I would apply not for the body's health, but rather to the mind's."[1] This lovesick youth of twenty was cut off from the outer world. Bath, ignorant of his hiding-place, even fancied that he had gone to France.[2] Face to face with an elusive past, he sought the solace of friendship, of which he finely wrote that it was "the most noble of all preceptors."

The first phase of Sheridan's retirement was truly recessional. And it proved recessional not only by a reaction of mood and health after the severe tension of the last few months, but by an access of study. Never was he more serious and strenuous both in mind and body, yet never also was he more convinced that reverie transcends learning, though study is requisite for thought. Never did he think harder or feel more. In every line of this Grenville correspondence we recognise a native independence at odds with fate, and a consciousness of genius prompting the first calls of ambition. Above all, we shall find for how much feeling counted in his outlook and how deeply rooted was his instinctive Rousseauism. He believed, in brief, and speaking broadly, that civilisation was a mistake.

As for his reading, we find him absorbed in astronomy, mathematics, "mensuration," and even navigation. He purposed to learn French and Italian. He left a long abstract of the history of England, and the son of his second marriage had seen no less than six copy-books of this date, "each filled with notes and references to mathematics, geography, history, Latin

[1] Sheridan MSS. and Rae, Vol. I., p. 225. [September] 1772.

[2] "It is thought that you are gone to France." T. Grenville to Sheridan, September 4, 1771; Sheridan MSS. and Rae, Vol. I., p. 224.

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and other studies."[1] Nor were *belles lettres* neglected. Linley, who seems to have exhorted him about this time to do justice to his talents, dropped hints that "An Heroick Epistle and Postscript" (possibly a parody of Mason) proceeded from his young friend's pen. Indeed, Sheridan tells Grenville that he will show him fantasies. But he chiefly busied himself over prose. A criticism on the style of Sir William Temple and a lengthy and running commentary on Blackstone exist, though the historical "Abstract" has vanished. His Waltham tutor was a Mr. Adams, whom he depicts as a self-taught and poverty-stricken man blest with "great merit and a wife and family." With him he worked, as he phrased it, "like the devil in Milton, 'oar and sail.'" Monotony was an avowed incentive to study, but his main stimulus was the diversion of his thoughts from Bath, with all its connected and continued vexations.

"I never now reflect on that place," he told his Oxford Achates at the beginning of the next year, "but it puts me out of sorts for writing on other matters; though I do believe I may now say that it can scarcely furnish me with an agreeable subject even to think on. However, I can find relief from most things in study, and while the mind is seriously employed we grow inattentive to the peevish interruption of the feelings and the passions."[2] One other work, repeatedly mentioned in these

[1] Two of these, on geography and astronomy, remain at Frampton Court, while another on "Horticulture," which treats of "esculent plants, vines," etc., is in that portion of Sheridan's Manuscripts which Mr. Wilfred Sheridan presented to the Vaughan Library at Harrow.

[2] Sheridan to T. Grenville, January 4, 1773 (Sheridan MSS. and Rae, Vol. I., p. 246). For the preceding facts cf. his letter to the same of October 30, 1772, about his items of study (*ibid.*, p. 233); Moore, Vol. I., p. 108 (about the English history—over a hundred pages in a small quarto volume); Sheridan MSS., which contain Charles' recollection, and also the surviving copy-books; while Rae mentions the former, Vol. I., p. 252. For two of the compositions cf. Moore, Vol. I., pp. 102 and 103; for the Blackstone, Sheridan MSS. The passage about showing "some idle things that I have written" to Grenville, cf. his letter to him of October 30, 1772 (Rae, Vol. I., p. 235); and cf. a similar earlier passage about showing him "many curious productions, the abortions of a fantastic or of a melancholy conception." Letter of November 23, *ibid.*, p. 240. Linley's

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letters, the fruit not of books but experience, is missing, and its absence is regrettable. He promised to show his friend the autograph "Memoirs" of his romance with Miss Linley, but apparently that promise remained unkept. He or she must have destroyed the manuscript, for not a vestige of it remains; yet we would willingly lose the whole of his early lucubrations for a peep at one page of its story.

He reached his hermitage on Friday, August 28, and on the last day of the month reported himself to his father, whom he addressed as "Sir." With some diplomacy he opens by deprecating the suspicion which had relegated him to his purgatory. Up to a point he owns its justice; "some accidental occurrences," he writes, had "served greatly to strengthen it,"—"occurrences" which doubtless meant stolen interviews in breach of repeated promises. Moreover, before he had been packed off to the Parkers, Miss Linley had left for Wells, and her Dick was doubtless constrained to bid her farewell and moot the fatal agreement. "There were circumstances," he resumes, "attending that connexion which you so much wished me to break off which made it almost impossible to deal with proper candour on all sides [he refers to the so-called marriage]; and I can only reassure you that what might strongly seem to be a departing from my word and your injunctions was, sincerely, and to the best of my judgment, entered on

letter (kindly volunteered while this work was going through the press) comes from the Broadley autographs. The slightly later date affixed to it (that of shortly after Sheridan's marriage) can hardly be correct, since it breathes not a word of the daughter whom Linley loved. For his tutor's name cf. the letter to his father, and for the description of him his letter to Grenville of October 30, both *sup. cit.*; the quotation from Milton and the reference to modern languages in his letter to Grenville of November 28, 1772, Rae, Vol. I., p. 240. The stimulus of monotony is noted in a letter to his father of August 30, 1772, two days after his arrival. Cf. Rae, *ibid.*, p. 212: "I have at least one great inducement to study: nothing else to do. And I doubt not but that a little habit founded even on that will in no long time counteract the other habit of dissipation, and a habit I must call it, as I still affirm that I very seldom remember to have felt anything like real satisfaction in those Pleasures which constituted it."

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with a view to secure to myself the power of adhering effectually to both in the future." His "word" alludes to the pledge never to correspond, but a harder promise, be it remembered, had been exacted from him: the promise of ending his betrothal, the promise which he could not bring himself to divulge to his ladylove.[1] "The merit or demerit of my having so involved myself," he continues, "is not now a question; but I can now have no motive in solemnly declaring that I have extricated myself, and on this subject you shall never again have the smallest uneasiness." Did he mean this? He had not broken off the match, but he did honestly mean not to correspond, for to Grenville also he wrote that "it *is* and *must* be impossible," and he refuses to answer a letter from her, "for I cannot break a solemn promise." From his love-dilemma this epistle passes to his studies and from his studies to his debts. He could not have worked in Bath with these debts—the debts of boyish extravagance—unpaid. But he keeps back part of the truth from his father, as will soon appear from another letter of even date. Finally, he protests his filial gratitude, and here peeps forth that sad dog, Captain Absolute: "I have said that where I thought myself most obliged, I have felt least capable of showing it. I assure you, Sir, it has been so with me in regard to you. I mention this only that you may not think me insensible to what you have done, as Time, not Professions, must show, whether by profiting by it I am inclined to repay you." And after some prattle about the Parkers, a statement that he has duly called on the Chamberlaines in town, and an admission that he has mistakenly packed up his father's comedy, he remains his "truly affect. and dutiful son."[2]

As he wrote these lines his tongue was surely in his cheek. But at the same time he took up his pen to his sister Elizabeth, promising another note to Alicia by the next post.

[1] Cf. the note *ante*, p. 396.

[2] R. B. S. to T. Sheridan, Sunday, August 30, 1772 (Rae, Vol. I., p. 212). Rae is mistaken in fixing the date of his arrival as "Thursday, the 27th," as this Sunday letter alone shows.

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This letter is in another strain; all the demureness disappears, and its tone resembles a schoolboy's when his master has walked out of the room. It is written "wholly *entre nous*." All his bills are to be settled, some of them by remittances from his father, to whom he will mention them in his "own way." One tradesman, the particulars of whose bill he wishes withheld, bears the appropriate name of "Evill." There are Mr. D'Oiley's bill, "Mrs. Purdie's," one of "Thwaites" for pistols, one of "Mrs. Bowers" (meet assonant) for flowers; and she may be paid "*what she likes*" for "doing ruffles," so she washed also. Though he thinks she "seemed more alarmed for the money than necessary" (and the reader may be sceptical), paid she is to be. Altogether it is a millennial month, and everybody is to be gratified. And then he rises to the generosity of the born debtor grieving to part with his debts. He has given "friend Paumier" his invaluable "Arts and Sciences." Betsy is to "get them bound" for presentation; "it would not cost above 14 or 16 shillings," and, strange corollary, "I assure you I am planning Prudence and all the Cardinal Virtues. . . . You see, this is a mere letter of business for you and your sister. Never *shew* my letters to *any* one"—as if business implied secrecy. In future epistles, several of the Bath folks appear, as visitors to his hosts, among them—and this will be material—the "Miss C." of whom the divine Elizabeth had already been jealous. But in this letter we hear of the Peakes, presumably relatives of him who was to be treasurer of Drury Lane. Miss Peake rejoiced at Sheridan's presence. She wanted him to teach her "*an almande*" [*sic*]: he was a known dancer, "the glass of fashion and the mould of form." As for the soiled fripperies which he had "left behind" him, Betsy is especially charged with the care of his "old Muff." And then as to the future, were they really, he enquires, going to France? "Remember me," he concludes, in a significant sentence, "to friends, acquaintances, etc., etc., particularly Breretonites, Morganites, Walshites,[1] Lynnites" ("how like linnets!" he sighs), and "*kindly to your gentle*

[1] Their landlords. Cf. Barnett's letter to Sheridan.

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friend La Juliana." Did he dread to name Miss Linley in a letter that might circulate, and is "Juliana" the source of "Julia" in his "Rivals"?

The general tenor of his letters to Grenville is reflective and sentimental, but a November invitation, which the undergraduate could not accept, shows that his penitentiary was not quite so black as smouldering passion and tender wistfulness painted it. The "Pierrot" element is never far from Sheridan. "I wish you could on any pretence come and spend a fortnight in Essex," he says. "You shall hunt and shoot and study in the prettiest rotation imaginable. At night you shall go on star-gazing parties, and with ladies too, and conclude the day with wine and pipes, if you choose them. . . . However, I must stipulate one thing against the time we are to meet, which is, that you shall advance part of the way from Oxford and meet me, 'thy single arm to mine,' to spend one day uninterrupted before I enter the town."[1]

Their friendship was no common one. Sheridan told him that he replaced an early intimate ("Forbes"), who had first fixed in his heart the true ideal of a friend. "He died," writes Sheridan, "and in proportion as I grew in acquaintance with others my regret for him increased, but the ideal remained, on the same principle as a man newly married would not so much deplore the loss of his new-born child while he hoped that another year would probably supply its place. But let years roll on and bring no appearance of a compensation, with aggravated distress he curses the stroke that robbed him of the first."[2] Next to love, friendship plays the greatest part in this correspondence, and next to these, sensibility and ambition. Sheridan displays himself alike as lover, friend, man of feeling, and aspirant. All these aspects are handled with observation and originality.

He believed in friendship at first sight, nor would he deign to be a friend on any footing but that of equality, or suffer the least triviality in friendly correspondence. Friendship's

[1] Sheridan to T. Grenville, November 28, 1772. Cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 240.
[2] Sheridan to T. Grenville, October 30, 1772. Cf. Rae, Vol. I., p. 233.

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office according to Sheridan is earnest colloquy, and he demanded much of an ideal friend. "At present," he observes in the first letter, "I have the more opinion of our acquaintance on account of its not being founded on the common principles of time and companionship. And though there was *one* incidental circumstance which served in a manner to bring forth the expression of those mutual feelings by which we knew one another [the Linley episode], yet I cannot but flatter myself that some other might have answered the same purpose. As we really find in *love* frequent proof of what the novelists call a *sudden sympathy* [he bears his mother's "Sidney Biddulph" in mind], I confess I have an opinionof the same in *friendship*, and I believe the youngest man's experience will furnish him with instances of his having felt a strong disposition towards a friendship with a man upon the very commencement of their acquaintance. If it so happens that they are separated soon after, most commonly the acquaintance drops, as the present mode seems to have fixed a probation of time, exchange of services, intercourse at meals, etc., as the necessary foundation of friendship and correspondence. . . . For my part, I confess myself an admirer of those times when the ties of *friendship* as well as *love* could with some safety be formed at the first instigation of our hearts. It is what we call the *civilization* of society that has destroyed this by making a *fashion of professions*, and still more the *corruption* that followed it, which has so far blunted all the nobler feelings of man, that the test of time and services is become necessary to *apologize* for any mutual confidence or *disinterested* regard. But writing on friendship is not writing to my friend." The voice of Rousseau in the last portion is resonant.

This passage succeeds a proud protest of independence, and he notes that their correspondence opened by Grenville's request. While his friend's "station" is no higher than at present, "I cannot be insincere in declaring how much I *feel* that I wish for your conversation and friendship. A person of ingenuous mind and any true spirit may have the most familiar attachment to another though possessed in a superior degree of

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every natural endowment as well as acquired qualification, but where the accidental advantages of rank and fortune are added to them, I believe it to be impossible. I only mention this in order to stipulate that as my connexion is with Mr. *Thomas Grenville*, if ever you should by any accident cease to be that gentleman, you must not be surprised if you think our correspondence dissolved."

Thomas Grenville never ceased to remain Thomas Grenville and Sheridan's friend. The second son of George Grenville (Chatham's "gentle shepherd"), the grandson of Hester Temple, four years younger than Sheridan yet four years his senior in Parliament, he followed him at every turn of his road, though politically parted by the schisms of 1794. They will be found corresponding in 1783 about the independence of America and the Peace of Paris, which Grenville helped to negotiate when Sheridan was an Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. They were colleagues in the administration of 1806, and in 1816 he walked among the mourners by his hearse. He practically retired from public life in 1807, was a famous bibliophile, and lingered on till December, 1846—a link between the days of Sheridan and those of Disraeli. He seems to have been the sole Grenville fraught with personal charm. Betsy Sheridan, who met him under her brother's roof, speaks of him as an "angel." There was no cant or condescension about him, and he answered Sheridan's appeals with warmth and modesty. Better equipped than his friend, he yet appreciated his superior intellect, though perhaps he could not wholly respond to the importunities for deeper thought with which Sheridan tasked his friendship. "It is a common observation," contended the elder, "that the greatest exercise of familiar letter-writing consists in an easy and unpremeditated style. . . . I confess I have always regarded correspondence of a true kind in a more serious light. I think it is a farce when it is carried on between mere acquaintances. If two men who fancy themselves united in friendship have so little serious understanding as never when together to discourse upon any subjects beyond the ordinary topics of chit-chat, they

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are certainly right in not aiming at more in their letters. . . . I would have every man *write* to his friend as he would *speak*, yet not as he would speak to him at a dinner or assembly, but (if he pretends to be a man of sense) as he would speak to him in those uninterrupted retired hours of mutual confidence and communication in which consist the spirit and enjoyment of friendship. For I do not recommend any attention . . . to language or expression. They will be right of course; it will be the language of the heart and the expression of the feelings; but I would rather court than avoid a train of serious reflection."[1] Little as Cowper shared with Sheridan, he too has recorded his contempt of vapidity:—

> "An extract from his diary—no more,
> A tasteless journal of the day before.
> He walked abroad, o'ertaken in the rain,
> Called on a friend, drank tea, stepped home again;
> Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk
> With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk.
> I interrupt him with a sudden bow,
> 'Adieu, dear sir! lest you should lose it now.'"[2]

"*The expression of the feelings*"—that is the keynote to all Sheridan's colloquial reverie. "I have been frequently blamed by my friends," he confides to his listener, "for a warmth of sentiment which prompts me to follow the first dictates of (I will say) my *feelings* without a deliberate and calm review of my pursuit"; and in another place he avows, with Miss Linley in his heart, that the pursuit even of hopeless love is a tonic. Sheridan is always the "man of feeling." When he runs up to London and sits down at his old haunt, the Bedford coffee-house, it is to muse aloud on the emptiness of dissipation and to tell his friend how eagerly a man flies from low company "to contemplate even the picture of his mistress." So, too, in literature; his preference of romance to realism and his delight in Sir Philip Sidney's "Arcadia"

[1] Sheridan to T. Grenville, November 10, 1772. Sheridan MSS. and Rae, Vol. I., p. 236.

[2] "Conversation."

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have been touched on already. "If you have not read it," he writes, "and ever read romances, I wish you would read it. I am sure there is much of it that would charm you. For my own part, when I read for entertainment I had much rather view the characters of life as I would wish they *were* than as they *are:* therefore I hate novels and love romances. The praise of the best of the former, their being *natural*, as it is called, is to me their greatest demerit. Thus it is with Fielding's, Smollet[t]'s, etc. Why should men have a satisfaction in viewing only the mean and distorted figures of Nature? Though, truly speaking, not of Nature but of vicious and corrupt society. Whatever merit the painter may have in his execution, an honest mind is disgusted with the design."[1] This romantic sentimentalism, which finds many illustrations, removes Sheridan far from the conventional type of him in biography.

To such an one the study of law was uncongenial, and it is clear from these letters that he only regarded the Bar as a stepping-stone. When the Middle Temple was in sight, he calls it "the great gate of power." Both for himself and for Grenville, who was qualifying for the same profession, it was a means, not an end. Five years of term-keeping lay before them, and they might "save time hereafter without preventing" the pursuit of "anything else for the future."[2] Clearly Sheridan had no relish for Disraeli's "gout and a coronet at fifty." Long before, the father had been offered commissions in the army for both his sons by the Lord-Lieutenant, and "General" Sheridan might not have sounded unfamiliar to modern ears. But the red coat offered fewer attractions than the black. From his boyhood Sheridan had hovered round politics, and he doubtless thought that the Bar was its avenue. Lawyers were prominent in the Senate. The future Mansfield had long achieved his parliamentary fame; the future Thurlow was already Attorney-General. Yet what a splendid advocate Sheridan would have made had he persevered in his calling, and

[1] Letter of October 30, 1772. Rae, p. 235.
[2] Letter of January 4, 1773. Rae, p. 248.

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what a born decorator of facts was lost to it by his desertion! The voice that was to ring through Westminster Hall would surely have proved powerful in the courts that neighboured it.

Even now, with Blackstone in his hands, a fresh chance presented itself. Lord Townshend held out hopes of a diplomatic career that might eclipse Charles's secretaryship at Stockholm. But those hopes soon went the way of others, and Sheridan bemoaned the cruelty of raising fictitious expectations. He consoled himself by the example of an envoy just returned from Berlin, where he had stayed twelve years with distinction, only to be wrecked and stranded by the ministry. So the law remained Sheridan's ladder. "Were I once entered . . . I should not care how much I am employed, nor where, during the five years previous to practice, as I should dedicate it to study and look forward to the expiration of that term as to independence. Any employment therefore in England would facilitate my scheme." "Hence, idle joys," he exclaimed a month or so later, as he bade adieu "to everything but study and the pursuit of business."[1]

But it is the quality of his ambition that interests us in this correspondence. "True ambition," he remarks in a passage foreshadowing his speeches, "can never be disappointed; it hopes most when most oppressed, and the very scene which presents it with its misfortunes denies it time to feel or opportunity to indulge them. Then its object is as immortal as the source of it. Our employments here will ever depend upon ourselves and our own abilities; in the other they can exist but on the verge of accident, and others' caprice. Death cannot touch the object of the one; the other must live a slave to the dread of his dart." In accentuating his independence of spirit in the analysis of character which

[1] Letters of November 17, 1772, and January 4, 1773. Rae, Vol. I., p. 241. In the last letter of the series (that of February 24, 1773; cf. Rae, Vol. I., pp. 249, 250) he says of Lord T., "I have placed him in one of my very dark-brown books, for there was something very cruel in the manner in which he has (unsolicited) raised my father's expectations and employed his time and attention, as if he sought a pleasure in wantonly disappointing one whom he had made his sanguine applauder."

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prefaces this volume, two passages were chosen from these letters, the one answering objections to public life, the other, indignant at Grenville's dictum about "certain spheres in which God has placed us."[1] The context of the former will not be out of place here: "Yet let me suppose a man possessed of everything that can endear a private station: a woman loving him as much as soul could love her; a friend who was to him as himself; a moderate and valuable society, and a fortune to furnish the luxuries of study and the gratifications of benevolence. Yet to minds of a certain tone I can conceive that there is one reflection which would embitter this cup of joy at our lips, and the completion of which in a single instance would snatch it irrevocably from our hands. A man in such a retirement rests his happiness on persons, not things. Of all others he is least happy in principle or from within himself. Let his mistress or his friends die, or let him fear they will, or that they may change, and he is at once completely miserable. The calm and secluded mode of his living, which formed one of its chief comforts, must in that case be one of the chief causes of his extreme disgust. . . . Could our natural stock of benevolence be intended to be thus circumscribed? Was it meant that we should shrink from the active principles of virtue and consequently of true happiness, and indolently insure them both on others' lives? Nor can such a life be the sphere of true benevolence. He who retires to solitude (unless convinced that he is fit for no other station), and thinks that he does much in relieving the few objects of distress that groan within his hearing, does really but gratify himself in removing what must annoy him, on the same principle that he does dunghills or ruins."[2] Action, public life, and public spirit already sounded their bugle-call.

[1] Letters of January 4 and February 24, 1773, respectively. Cf. Rae, Vol. I., at pp. 246 and 250.

[2] Letter of January 4, 1773. The passage is transcribed by Mr. Rae, Vol. I., p. 246. Grenville's few answers to Sheridan are among the Sheridan MSS. Sheridan's own letters were found by Rae in a neglected bundle at Stowe. It must be regretted that more of such early letters are

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Two of the essays that now employed him claim notice before the thread of narrative is resumed. Part of Sheridan's criticisms on the works of Sir William Temple are given by Moore, who has left a note among the Sheridan papers that these (and others) disappeared. They concern style alone and have little interest except in this connection. Sheridan objects to Temple's English, his "fell to's" and "come to be's," but after basking in Sidney's Italian garden he would scarcely appreciate the trimness of Dutch *parterres*. He further singles out Sir William's blend of the metaphorical and literal in two offending sentences. In rhyme, he cavils at his assonants, yet he too is at fault in some of his occasional pieces, and "those who fail themselves always exact the most," as the least punctual of correspondents once reminded the friend whom he caught tripping.[1]

But the law also engaged his attention. He made some significant remarks on Blackstone which take up seven pages of foolscap—sterner stuff and typical of his lifelong opinions. In confuting Blackstone's thesis as to the social origin of property, Sheridan is again Rousseau's disciple. He harps on the "law of Nature," all along it is "Nature" that he cites, while who can doubt that an allusion to "creditors" is a personal reminiscence?—"Absurd. A man's right to devise by Testament could not proceed from motives produced by Society, if the right come before Society—by this rule the younger children should inherit. The Disposition of property by Testament could not have been so produced because in Nature it must have been established before debts or Creditors were ever heard of. I take the Bible as authority no *further* than as a Tale of a nation.[2] . . . That which Reason would generally admit is the

missing. Moore pressed Thomas Grenville to let him use the correspondence, but he declined on the ground that they "only" concerned the first Mrs. Sheridan. He probably thought that they might offend the surviving Linleys.

[1] Letter of October 30, 1772. Cf. Rae, Vol. I., at p. 235. Moore's summary of Sheridan's comments on Temple is in Vol. I., p. 105.

[2] In another note, he says, "What Israel and Abraham did will never stand as argument in a state of Nature. The soil was *not* then in common."

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law of Nature. . . . A solitary being can have no property—the word implies: 'This is *mine*, and not *yours*.' Now without an appeal the point is in doubt, for possession is force. . . . Society did not make Laws, but only confirmed what before existed. Scripture [has been] tortured on either side, as in disputes of Faith—on a subject where it has no kind of business." These sentences are lucid in comparison with many in these notes, but the next has a bearing on the far future when Sheridan had become a land-owner, and himself championed the common rights of the peasants near Polesden. "Our Commons prove," he proceeds, "what the original landed Property was. None of it can be enclosed without consent, and if we suppose a Society without exclusive property, it was in this way it was introduced—'*as in a Club*.' But it were hard if by the Law of Cities and Society every man was bound to be a member of certain Clubs, and the distinction is that one must, when entered, conform to the rules of the Club, yet it is in one's own election to belong to one."

Yet a few more of these remarks must be quoted, since they show how early his political bias took shape. Not only does he rest his logic on the compact of the Revolution, but the inherent repugnance to every kind of "arbitrary power" that was to range him with Fox here finds a Jacobin expression before Jacobinism had begun. "An unnatural Power given to anyone, tho' by general consent, is not the less a Tyranny. The hardest restraint is that succeeding generations have always been in some degree bound by the actions of their ignorant Ancestors, and they have alway[s] promised for Posterity. *Therefore*" (and here again we catch Rousseau's voice) "every man is born in a state of *absolute* Slavery, for even though he may assist in the modes of Government, he must submit to its Principle. . . . Am I not born to an Allegiance which I can in

In every case the page of Blackstone precedes his remarks. This is on p. "6," those cited in the text on pp. "11 and 12." The writer found these notes, which have hitherto escaped attention, among the Sheridan MSS.

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no ways shake off?—is it in my Power solemnly to renounce the Government and go to live in a Desert, or change it? We should be *born* subjects to none but Government, and be received as *citizens, if we chuse it*, at an age of maturity. A man is suffered to change his Religion—Dissenters will leave a Bishop. I do not nor can [not] consider myself as a free being." Years onwards, in an unpublished refutation of Burke, he pressed the self-same argument about binding Posterity. And he goes further in these early lucubrations; he speaks like a modern Communist. There is only one "possible state of Society possessing true Liberty," he exclaims, and that is where every member consents "to the making of it at a time when all were exactly equal[l] in Wealth, Possessions, etc., and agreed to abide by such and such covenants. But all laws at present are Tyranny. A resolution of the Rich against stealing is Tyranny. All Liberty consists in the Probability of not being oppressed. What assurance have we that we shall not be taxed at eight shillings in the pound? No more than the Colonies have. [His eyes here are already on America.] It is not the interest of the Legislative body to do it in either case. In proportion as the members of the House of Commons have not Landed Property, the improbability lessens." And therefore—strange deduction for an imperial Socialist!—"it would be better if money bills took their rise in the House of Lords, who are always men of landed property." In this year of grace nineteen hundred and nine, there may be some who agree with him. He concludes by inveighing against local burdens: "*Parish taxes* in most towns exceed the King's. If a number of gentlemen were to mob the statesmen [as yet gentlewomen abstained], they could have no redress—nor have their servants." So true is it that political extremes are closely allied to the pocket.

These feelings decided his earliest outlook on politics and the world, and those who have dismissed him as a theatrical opportunist, can have been little aware how instinctive was his youthful Radicalism, or how much sentimentality coloured all his attitudes.

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While his mind was thus active, plot and counter-plot still environed him. The vindictive Mathews did not rest. He threatened to call out Sheridan's irresolute second if he refused to sign Barnett's account of the second duel, and accordingly Paumier signed that account without consulting his principal. Paumier justified this conduct to Sheridan, greatly to his father's indignation, and although Sheridan made allowances for his second, all his fury against Mathews revived. He would challenge him once more and attempt a third duel in half a year. Here Grenville, young as he was, brought riper wisdom to bear. He besought his friend not to be enticed into a needless meeting with such a beast (his word is worse) as the discredited betrayer, nor to yield his enemy the fresh opening that he designed. His repeated entreaties prevailed, and Mathews, baulked of his revenge, levanted across the water. Old Sheridan too once more changed his positive mind. The family should not winter in France—that was flat—nor should his son be suffered the dangerous neighbourhood of the capital. Dick should go further afield from Miss Linley: he should be a student indeed. "He proposed," wrote the son even in January, "that I should retire a few hundred miles northward on a party with Messrs. Coke, Blackstone & Co.," and Dick must have humoured him; for by mid-March the father assured Charles that the project was of Richard's making, and that his earnest promises of study had gained his sanction for immediate entrance at the Middle Temple. But young Sheridan well understood his father's real reason—the fear "that all the counties of the neighbourhood of London were within the magic circle of a certain formidable enchantress who was to keep her Lent there."[1]

[1] Sheridan writes that his father, however, had not been "alert" enough to prevent the effects which had followed the near approach of this charmer. He writes, too, that his father also feared "some revival of my dispute with M[athews] or his party," but that he was now "convinced as to my peaceable disposition," so that he might even "re-alter" his mind. The destination of this Yorkshire trip may have been Scarborough, as after-allusions show that Sheridan had certainly at some time visited the place, but the extreme unlikelihood of this particular journey ever having

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The "enchantress," then, approaches London, but in the interval, ah! where and how was she? She had written, but Dick steadily refused an answer. Rumours of an intended marriage were rife. The happy man was alleged to be Sir Thomas Clarges, a friend of Grenville's. Grenville reassured his friend; Clarges denied that he had ever proposed; as a matter of fact, however, he had already been rejected. Sheridan was beside himself. In his jealousy he even sounded Grenville as to his own feelings—a suspicion which he afterwards explained away. He tracked his Eliza's every movement. She is off to Winchester, to Gloucester; she is back at Bath; heavens! by the Lent of 1773 she is actually in London, within a ride of Farm Hill, and under engagement to sing at the oratorios of the season.[1] But, hopeless as he felt, and wherever she wandered, her face still haunted Sheridan's heart; and now that she seemed in sight, his resolution was shaken, and who could foretell what might happen? "Eliza," he told Grenville at the close of February, "is within an hour's ride of me, and must have been for some time, yet, upon my honour, I have and do industriously avoid knowing the particular place that is blest with her inhabiting. I was obliged to go to London the other day, and I protest to you, no country girl passing alone through a churchyard at midnight ever dreaded more the appearance of a ghost, than I did to encounter this (for once I'll say) *terrestrial* being."

But said we not that Sheridan was Pierrot? "Prudence and the cardinal virtues" palled, and even his despair was volatile. He had not yearned for this moment without some previous interludes. A Mrs. Mary Lyster, the flighty wife of a neighbouring surgeon, seems to have set her cap at him, while among the Parkers' Bath friends the uncertain "Miss C——y"

been undertaken will soon be shown. According to the son's letter, the visit to Yorkshire was his father's proposal.

[1] Colman had sounded Linley as to whether she would not act in operetta; and her father was quite willing to see his daughter on the boards, provided that the profits were duly safeguarded for himself. The oratorios were given at the leading theatres.

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complicated the tangle. Moonlit meetings ensued. "Miss C——y," violently in love (so wrote Miss Linley), returned to Bath bristling with jealousy and scandal, and from Mrs. Lyster a note remains, repenting of having provoked the wrath of Sheridan's "best beloved." Indignant Miss Linley certainly was, the more so when Sylvio, on hearing of his Laura's alleged betrothal, declined to release her love-letters, which must have contained references to their French "wedding." So beset was the maid of Bath, that, to content her father, she had well-nigh resolved on a marriage of convenience to a middle-aged and wealthy suitor who had her happiness at heart. That she could ever love any man again she most passionately denied.[1] A letter to Sheridan blazing with the mingled fires of wounded affection and rebellious anger, will best depict her feelings:—

"I have been deceived so grossly by you and by every one that it has almost deprived me of my reason, but I have paid too, too dear for my experience ever to put [it] in your power, or anyone's, to impose on me again. I did not expect you to attempt to vindicate your conduct. You cannot to me. Think—oh, reflect on what I have suffered, and then judge if I can consent to risk my life and happiness. For God's sake, S——n, do not endeavour to plunge me again into misery. . . . Consider how much your persisting to refuse my letters will distress me. Reason, honour, everything forbids it. This is not a sudden resolution, but the consequence of cool deliberate reflection. You are sensible it is not from caprice, but when I tell you that I have lately had some conversation with Mrs. L—— and Miss C——y, you will not suppose I will be again deceived. . . ."

And she wrote again. Sheridan had evidently exposed the luckless "Miss C——y," whom Miss Linley now pitied, adding, but adding with some respect for her lover, "Surely the remorse, the anguish which she feels hourly, joined to the opinion she is sensible you entertain of her, is punishment sufficient." The misunderstanding (if misunderstanding it was) had been cleared up, but Eliza showed no signs of relenting. She still pressed for those ambiguous letters, and Sheridan, who would not

[1] The preceding *précis* comes mainly from the letters given by Rae.

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lightly forego his lady-love, refused to surrender them till she had given her word that she preferred another. Under these circumstances she supplicated once more. Her appeal must have been written in or near the metropolis, which during the whole of March, and, indeed, almost up to the second week of April, was the scene of her performances in Handel's oratorios, including "Judas Maccabæus," whose "Honour and Arms" must surely have struck a note of pride and tenderness.[1] Mr. Rae thought that this letter of hers to Sheridan was written while both of them were in Yorkshire, the Derbyshire side of which was the Linleys' original home. But the known dates

[1] The programme runs as follows:—

"At the
THEATRE ROYAL
In DRURY LANE,
To-morrow, Wednesday, March 3, 1773,
Will be Performed
JUDAS MACCHABÆUS,
An Oratorio
Composed by MR. HANDEL.
The Principal Vocal parts by
MISS LINLEY,
MRS. WEICHSEL,
MISS MARY LINLEY,
MR. NORRIS,
And MR. PARRY.
End of the First Act, A Concerto on the ORGAN,
By MR. STANLEY.
Tickets to be had, and Places for the Boxes to be taken of MR. JOHNSON, at the Stage-Door of the Theatre, at HALF A GUINEA each.
Pit 5*s*. First Gallery 3*s*. 6*d*. Second Gallery 2*s*.
The Doors will be opened at FIVE o'Clock.
To begin at Half past SIX. Vivant Rex & Regina."

Mrs. Weichsel was the mother of Mrs. Billington, who at this time was a child of five. Mr. Norris had sung with Miss Linley at Oxford, and was one of her flames. Mr. Stanley was the impresario, of whom we shall hear again. Miss Linley first sang in the London Oratorios during the season of 1769. On April 3 of that year she performed in "Ruth" "at the chapel near Hyde Park Corner" and "for the benefit of the Lock Hospital." Her sister, who was to make her theatrical *début* next year, also sang at the age of eleven. Cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 134 *d*.

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of Sheridan's proposed journey and of his admission into the Middle Temple, scarcely admit of the reading-party, while her ascertained presence in or near London from February to mid-April excludes the possibility of a Yorkshire visit on her part during the interval.[1] Sheridan must have abandoned his expedition when he found that Miss Linley's engagements would be prolonged, and this final appeal to him should be dated during the first fortnight of March. It was probably received at the Bedford coffee-house, where Sheridan lodged when in town,[2] and whither she tells Sheridan that her father will visit him, with the object, perhaps, of warning the scapegrace off the course. Linley, bent on the new match, had now exacted a solemn vow from his distracted daughter never to marry her vacillating swain. Even while she upbraids Sheridan, she cannot quite forsake him. Under all her "bitter agonies of remorse and rage" wells a sweet spring of tenderness for her only love. They had now repeatedly broken their compact never to correspond, and in his last letter Sheridan had evidently poured out his whole heart and assured her how unspeakably dear to him was her happiness. But he had not restored her letters. She was indeed miserable, watched and worried, doubtful even of the one man that she had fancied loyal till death. But, despite mistrust and cruelty, love will find out the way.

"You are sensible," proceeds what would fain be a farewell, "you are sensible when I left Bath I had not an idea of you but as a friend. It was not your person that gained my affection. No, S——n, it was that delicacy, that tender compassion, that interest which you seemed to take in my welfare, that were the motives which induced me to love you." She passes to the

[1] On March 16, old Sheridan, as we have seen, wrote to his son Charles, then at Stockholm, that Dick was bent on making this expedition. Dick was entered on the books of the Middle Temple on April 6, 1773, and his wedding-day was a week later. The reading-party could scarcely have been planned for less than a fortnight, considering the distance of the destination, and to this period must be added the time required for two journeys of some two hundred miles.

[2] Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 136.

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letters, his resolve never to surrender them while she was heart-whole, and his menace, perhaps to disclose the ceremony which had plighted them at Calais. "Do not distress me," she answers him, "so much as to continue in that resolution. Believe me I am incapable of loving any man. They [the letters] cannot be of any use to you. Do not think I shall alter my resolution, or that I am to be terrified by your threats. I will not think so basely of your principles as to suppose you meant anything by them. There are insurmountable obstacles to prevent our ever being united, even supposing I could be induced again to believe you!" She did not yet know that Sheridan's father had bound him not only to cease communication, but actually to surrender all thoughts of her. "Know then that before I left Bath, after I had refused Sir T. C[larges] and other gentlemen of fortune on your account, who I found had given up all thought of me, in the anguish of my soul, which was torn with all the agonies of remorse and rage, I vowed in the most solemn manner upon my knees before my parents that I never would be yours by my own consent, let what would be the consequence. My father took advantage of my distress, and by upbraidings mixed with persuasions, prevailed on me to promise that I would marry the first man (whose character was unexceptionable) that offered. I repented that I had made this promise afterwards, for though I resolved never to be yours, I had not the least intention to be another's. I comforted myself with thinking I should not be solicited, but I was deceived." And then she tells him of the "gentleman in London" who had generously addressed her. Her father had forced these visits, which so far had been few. "He is not a young man, but I believe a worthy one. When I found my father so resolute," she continues, "I resolved to acquaint the gentleman with every circumstance of my life. I did, and instead of inducing him to give me up, he is now more earnest than ever. I have declared it is not possible for me to love him, but he says he will depend on my generosity—in short, there is nothing I have not done to persuade him to leave me, but in vain. He has promised my father not to take my fortune,

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and you may be assured this circumstance will have great weight with him. You see how I am situated. If this was not the case, I could never be your wife—therefore once more I conjure you to leave me and cease persecuting me. My father has this minute left me. He knows I am writing to you, and it was with the greatest difficulty I pacified him. He was going immediately to your lodgings. He has given strict orders to Hannah to bring every letter to him. You will make me eternally miserable if you persist after what I have told you. Be assured I will not open any letter of yours, nor will I write again. If you wish me to think my happiness is dear to you, return my letters. If not, I cannot compel you, but I hope your generosity will not permit you to make an improper use of them. For God's sake write no more. I tremble at the consequences."[1]

"Never" is a long word, and not a month onwards they became man and wife. In beseeching him to write no more she betrayed her still lingering fondness. She steels herself less against him than herself. The letters which she reclaims must have been returned or destroyed, for not a vestige of them survives, though these outpourings were treasured and preserved. That soon afterwards Sheridan wrote again and again, that she too must have warmly responded, who can doubt? And can the reader doubt also that two more lyrics from "The Duenna" belong to this episode? The first is missing from the printed play, but it is included in the contemporary book of its songs :

"Ah! cruel maid, how hast thou changed
The temper of my mind!
My heart, by thee from mirth estranged,
Becomes like thee unkind.

By fortune favoured, clear in fame,
I once ambitious was;
And friends I had that fanned the flame,
And gave my youth applause.

[1] Transcribed by Rae, Vol. I., pp. 255—257, and the previous letter at p. 253. These letters, which are certainly genuine, are not among the Sheridan MSS. Their style should be compared with that of the so-called "spurious" document.

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But now my weakness all abuse,
Yet vain their taunts on me;
Friends, fortune, fame itself, I'd lose
To gain one smile from thee!

Yet only thou should'st not despise
My folly or my woe.
If I am mad—in others' eyes—
'Tis thou hast made me so.

But days like these with doubting curst
I will not long endure;
Am I despised?—I know the worst,
And also know my cure.

If, false, her vows she dare renounce,
That[1] instant ends my pain;
For oh! that heart must break at once,
Which cannot hate again!"

Not less despondent is the second, which must have been written soon after her discovery of the ladies' battle at Waltham Abbey:

"O had my love ne'er smiled on me,
I ne'er had known such anguish:
But think how false, how cruel, she
To bid me cease to languish,
To bid me hope her hand to gain,
Breathe on a flame half perished,
And then with cold and fixed disdain
To kill the hope she cherished!

Not worse his fate who on a wreck
That drove as winds did blow it,
Silent had left the shattered deck
To find a grave below it:
Then land was cried: no more resigned,
He glowed with joy to hear it,
Not worse his fate, his woe, to find
The wreck must sink ere near it."

Within a fortnight the strained position ended, but small direct evidence exists as to how the lovers were reconciled. The pages of Alicia's narrative concerning this episode have

[1] The word is printed "she," and a comma occurs after "vows," but the writer ventures to think his emendation correct.

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vanished ever since Moore used them for his "Life." Moore has, however, hinted their effect in a few graphic touches. It appears that Sheridan's young kinsman Ewart, who had also eloped, was the mediator. Sheridan, in close proximity to his best-beloved, "trod upon the heels of perilous probabilities," and "more than once disguised himself as a hackney coachman to drive her home from the theatre, though elsewhere this stratagem has been ascribed to him as an assistant in Ewart's love-affair. Moore glances at the breach between the lovers, which, from lack of documents, he misunderstands. He adverts to Sir Thomas Clarges's proposal, and to another less honourable offer of "heart and fortune" on the part of "Lord G——r," which has been read as Grosvenor. This rumour Moore discredits, but immediately after Miss Linley's union with Sheridan the newspapers published both the peer's advances and her dignified reply, part of which bears traces of her husband's hand.[1] Finally, he states that old Linley, finding it hopeless to sever them, consented without much difficulty to their wedding, and in this good office, according to Angelo, his parents were instrumental. Linley's *volte-face* has been explained in a way that requires some qualification. The reader will remember Miss Linley's expression in a letter to Sheridan after his second duel, to the effect that a note sent by him to her father was "of no use to him" because he was then "under age." This has been construed as implying his part-renunciation of Long's gift

[1] Cf. *Bath Chronicle*, April 15, 1773. (Cited by Mr. Green in his "Linley, Sheridan and Mathews at Bath.")

"My Lord,—Lest my silence should bear the most distant interpretation of listening to your proposals, I condescend to answer your infamous letter. You lament the laws will not permit you to offer me your hand. I lament it too, my lord, but on a different principle—to convince your dissipated heart that I have a soul capable of *refusing* a coronet when the owner is not the object of my affection—despising it when the offer of an unworthy possessor. The reception your *honourable* messenger met with [she was a "Lady A——"] in the execution of her embassy saves me the trouble of replying to the other parts of your letter, and (if you have any feelings left) will explain to you the *baseness* as well as the *inefficacy* of your design. L——y."

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to Miss Linley. But most of that fund had already been settled, and there are new documents which prove that, on her marriage, this settlement was transferred to fresh trustees. A *précis* of this marriage provision exists. A sum of £1,050 Consols represented the amount, and many years afterwards the only son of their union adverted to "the funds from which my mother's *jointure* was drawn."[1] The forbearance, therefore, which won Linley's esteem, could hardly have concerned the marriage settlement. But what Sheridan probably did after passing his nonage was to renew a promise never to touch some £1,200 which Linley had been allowed by his daughter to retain. Such an undertaking would weigh much with a man who wanted a wealthy suitor, and had early protested that he would rather see his daughter dead than united to one so extravagant as Sheridan.

Thus slenderly equipped, they looked forward with a rapture which only romance and inexperience could inspire. She still earned large sums nightly, and only four days before her wedding sang privately at Buckingham House before the King and Queen, who were "particularly affable." The King presented the father with a banknote for £100, while he profusely complimented the daughter,[2] and, as Horace Walpole informs us, even honoured her with a majestic ogle. This at once decided Sheridan never to turn those liquid tones into gold. Eighteen months later George III. offered him the post of director of oratorios. This he refused. All other offers were in vain. During the very honeymoon Arnold, the Pantheon impresario, failed in tempting Sheridan to let her

[1] Cf. Eg. MS. 1976, f. 40. "Thomas Sheridan to C. Ward, WILTON PARK, BEACONSFIELD" (1811 ?). Miss Linley's marriage settlement is detailed in a case stated for counsel's opinion in 1776. Cf. B. M., Winton Collection, B. K. S., 3, i., 2. The trustees were Linley, and one Swale, who was a witness at the wedding. It is Rae's conjecture that is here elucidated. He confirms it by citing Miss Linley's about her new suitor; cf. *ante*, the last line of p. 420.

[2] London Letter of April 10 in the *Bath Chronicle* of April 15, 1773, cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 262. Some complimentary verses by a "Lord C." are also added.

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sing at the Pantheon, and shortly afterwards no less than £3,200 for various appearances were declined.[1] It was this decision that Dr. Johnson will soon be found approving, nor should it be forgotten that it was as much the bride's as the bridegroom's. Sheridan signalised it by some charming verses —"To Eliza on Ceasing to Sing"—which are transcribed at the end of this volume. A quatrain of this unpublished poem has been quoted already; the first lines will be appropriate here:—

"Does my Eliza cease to sing,
Or tires my love to touch the string?
Behold, she knows with equal skill
To grace the Muse's nobler will.
Hear but her voice! amazed you swear
The soul of music centres there.
Read but her verse, and you'll confess,
Her song did raise your wonder less!"

Sheridan made no doubt that he would carve a career. On April the sixth he was duly entered at the Middle Temple, and in the Hilary term of the succeeding year he "was admitted into commons."[2] Just a week later, on Tuesday, April the thirteenth, they were married by licence in Marylebone Church, where, not eighteen years onwards, Emma Hart was to become Lady Hamilton. At the same place, too, and hour, Sheridan's friend Ewart wedded the heiress with whom he had run away.[3] Long afterwards, Mrs. Tickell referred to this church as her sister's

[1] *Morning Post*, February 4, 1774; Eg. MS. 1775, f. 139. For the King's offer cf. Sheridan's letter to Linley, November 17, 1774, transcribed by Moore, Vol. I., p. 12. For Arnold's offer cf. S. Arnold to "Mr. Sheridan, EAST BURNHAM, June 17, 1773." Sheridan MSS. (Mrs. Hall-Walker's portion). The amount offered was £1,200 for twelve nights of oratorio and £1,000 for "Giardini's Concert," cf. *Morning Post*, February 4, 1774. He offers for from six to ten or twelve nights in the following winter. "A speedy reply," he adds, "will greatly oblige." Perhaps this time he got it. For Horace Walpole's comment about the King cf. his letter to Lady Ossory of March 16, 1773: "... The King admires the last [Miss Linley] and ogles her as much as he dares to do so in so holy a place as an oratorio, and at so devout a service as 'Alexander's Feast.'"

[2] Watkins, Vol. I., p. 120.

[3] Moore, Vol. I., p. 112. This fact is clearly taken from the missing pages of Alicia's narrative.

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wedding-place. On the eve of the royal concert she had been indisposed,[1] but no physician could have detained the child-sister from that parting moment. The rites were solemnised by the Reverend Daniel Boote, Doctor of Divinity, in the presence of Thomas Linley and John Swale, with whom a month later the bridegroom settled all the expenses, observing that for a *friendly* bill it was "pretty decent."[2]

His father received the unwelcome tidings in Ireland, while preparing for a visit to Cork and a reception by Lord Muskerry.[3] When the blow fell, nothing could exceed his fury. He cursed Sheridan with bell and book, and swore that he had no other son but Charles. The estrangement was not healed for three years, and then for a time only. Yet we know from many indications that it was a real grief to one who in his great Warren Hastings speech dwelt tenderly on filial obligation, and during the year of that triumph proved unremitting in his attentions to the dying tyrant. For the nonce old Sheridan vented his rage upon his daughters, who were forbidden all access to the turtledoves.

[1] *Bath Chronicle*, as above.

[2] "Some unforeseen delays prevented my finishing with Swale till Thursday last, when everything was concluded. I likewise settled with him for his own account . . . and for a *friendly* bill it is pretty decent." Sheridan to Thomas Linley, "East Burnham, May 12, 1773," cited by Moore, Vol. I., p. 115. Swale, as has been noted, was one of the new trustees.

The writer has a copy of the marriage certificate, which is subjoined:—

"Marriages solemnized in the Parish of St. Mary-Le-Bone in the County of Middlesex in the year 1773.

"Richard Brinsley Sheridan Esqre of the Parish of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, and Elizabeth Ann Linley of this parish, a Minor, were married in this Church by Licence by and with consent of Thomas Linley ye lawful and natural father of ye s^d minor this thirteenth day of April in the year one thousand Seven hundred and Seventy Three By me Danl Boote, D.D.

"This Marriage was solemnized between us

"Richard Brinsley Sheridan.
"Elizabeth Ann Linley.

in the presence of Thos Linley.
"Jno Swale."

The day was Tuesday.

[3] "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan," p. 353.

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The young Sheridans were already a marked couple. On April the fifteenth the *Morning Post* announced that "Sheridan, a student of the Temple, is at last firmly united to Miss Linley, the celebrated Maid of Bath, on Tuesday."[1] The *Gentleman's Magazine* followed suit with "Mr. Sheridan, of the Middle Temple," and "the celebrated Miss Linley of Bath." The former added that the honeymoon would begin at "Barrow's Hedge in Surrey," but they soon shifted their quarters to a cottage at East Burnham, a spot which is still a sylvan dreamland.

The idyll of that honeymoon long lingered in their recollection. Years afterwards, when life was already soiled and worn, Sheridan thus hymned his thankfulness to his bride:—

"If fortune to thee treasures gave,
Each debt of mine thou'dst gladly pay,
And nothing for thyself would save
Nor deem thy bounty thrown away.
Cruel Eliza! would this ease
My burdens, or make me more free,
When the wish only does increase
The debt of love I owe to thee?"[2]

Love in a cottage is proverbial. The bliss of this "grateful youth" (so Sheridan calls himself in his "Duenna") pervades a long and lively letter which he dispatched to Thomas Grenville in the fall of the honeymoon, "the ambrosial month of love," as Sheridan then styled it. He had borrowed, he said, "a quill for the service of friendship," and he thus continues:—

". . . I feel myself absolutely and perfectly happy. As for the little clouds which the peering eye of prudence would descry to be gathering against the progress of the scene, I have a consoling Cherub that whispers me that, before they can threaten an adverse shower, a slight gale or two of fortune will disperse them. But when a man's married 'tis time he should leave off speaking in metaphor. . . . I have laid aside my design of turning Cupid into a turnspit wheel, and my meat

[1] Cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 139.

[2] Cited by Mr. Rae (Vol. II., p. 115), from the album which Mrs. Sheridan bequeathed to Mrs. Stratford Canning.

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undergoes the indignity of a cook's handling. I have even been so far diffident to my wife's musical abilities as to have carrots and cabbages put into the garden ground; and finding that whatever effect her voice might have upon the sheep on the Common, the mutton still obstinately continued stationary at the butcher's, I have deigned to become indebted to the brute's abilities. . . . I am now considerably advanced on the road to Oxford, and if we don't meet soon I shall say with Falstaff, 'You're not the man I took thee for.'"[1] The sole rift in his lute was his father's anger—the wrath, as Mrs. Sheridan was to write some years later, of a "*damnatum obstinatum mulio.*" "There is but one thing," Sheridan told Linley, "that has the least weight upon me, though it is one that I was prepared for. But time, while it strengthens the other blessings we possess, will, I hope, add that to the number. You will know that I speak with regard to my father. Betsy informs me you have written to him again. Have you heard from him?"[2] Linley himself, and his daughter Mary, came to stay at the close of June. He was completely satisfied, and after his return to Bath showed his confidence in his son-in-law by asking him to give his son and namesake (then in London) "a little wholesome advice."[3]

And during the prolonged stay at East Burnham, renewed applications for song beset St. Cecilia. A "Mr. Isaac" of Worcester (hence perhaps the "Isaac" of "The Duenna") insisted that an engagement eight months old should be kept, adding that though the father had contracted for it, the husband's "honour" was involved. Sheridan denied absolutely that Mrs. Sheridan was bound by Miss Linley's undertakings. He had been told that Lord North, the Chancellor, would take it as a great compliment if she would sing at Oxford. "Where

[1] Sheridan to T. Grenville, May 14, 1773, transcribed by Rae, Vol. I., p. 266.

[2] Sheridan to T. Linley, "EAST BURNHAM, May 12, 1773," transcribed by Moore, Vol. I., p. 115. From after allusions in Elizabeth Sheridan's correspondence with her sister Alicia LeFanu it appears that the quarrel was aggravated by Sheridan senior's resentment at old Linley's high-handed intermeddling. LeFanu MSS.

[3] Cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 268.

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would be the compliment," replied Sheridan, "if the Worcester engagement should be enforced as a right?"[1] But the bride did "compliment" Oxford, where the degrees "*honoris causâ*" were being conferred, and Lord North, nothing if not witty, said that her husband was himself entitled to a degree—"*uxoris causâ*."[2] Two years later, Dr. Johnson exclaimed of the quixotic bridegroom, "He resolved wisely and nobly to be sure. He is a brave man. Would not a gentleman be disgraced by having his wife singing publicly for hire? No, Sir, there can be no doubt here." With the great Doctor we agree. The censorious have blamed Sheridan's rule as the whim of vanity, but they have missed an objection which might occur to a cynic. The society which Sheridan coveted, and which proved his passport to fame, would scarcely have welcomed him had his wife remained a performer, and her charm it was that first opened a career to his talent.

Proud of his bride, he had now an incentive and an aim. The stage and politics already flattered his hopes. Amid all their transports he excogitated schemes, and we hear of him now at Morden, now in London. During one of these absences he vented his feelings in lines which contain the nucleus of Louisa's familiar song in "The Duenna":—

"Teach me, kind Hymen, teach—for thou
Must be my only tutor now—
Teach me some innocent employ
That shall the hateful thought destroy
That I this whole long night must pass
An exile from my love's embrace.
Alas! thou hast no wings, oh Time!
It was some thoughtless lover's rhyme
Who, writing in his Chloe's view,
Paid her the compliment through you.
For had he, if he truly loved,
But once the pangs of absence proved,
He'd crop[t] thy wings and in their stead
Have painted thee with wings of lead.
But 'tis the temper of the mind,
Where we thy regulator find.

[1] Sheridan to T. Linley, "EAST BURNHAM, May 12, 1773."
[2] Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. IV., p. 33.

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Still o'er the gay and o'er the young
With unfelt steps you flit along—
As Virgil's nymph o'er ripened corn
With such ethereal haste was borne
That every stock with upright head
Denied the pressure of her tread.
But o'er the wretched, oh, how slow
And heavy sweeps thy scythe of woe!
Oppressed beneath each stroke they bow,
Thy course engraven on their brow.
A day of absence shall consume
The glow of youth and manhood's bloom.
And one short night of anxious fear
Shall leave the wrinkles of a year.
For me who, when I'm happy, owe
No thanks to fortune that I'm so,
Who long have learned to look at one
Dear object, and at one alone,
For all the joy or all the sorrow
That gilds the day or threats the morrow,
I never felt thy footsteps light,
But when sweet love did aid thy flight.

* * * * *

But oh, the miser's real pleasure
Is not in knowing he has treasure:
He must behold the golden store
And feel and count his riches o'er.
Thus I, of one dear gem possest
And in that treasure only blest,
There every day would seek delight
And clasp the casket every night."[1]

Mrs. Sheridan was not slow with a reply which abides in the Canning album. It is long, and a few strophes will suffice.

[1] Sheridan MSS., transcribed by Moore, Vol. I., pp. 119—121. Louisa's song runs:—

"What bard, O Time, discover,
With wings first made thee move?
Ah! sure he was some lover
Who ne'er had left his love!
For who that once did prove
The pangs which absence brings,
Tho' but one day
He were away,
Could picture thee with wings?"

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These old-world interchanges of verse resemble the pressed flowers in some forgotten diary.

"How dull and heavy are the hours!
How slowly wastes the day!
Those once-loved scenes, those favourite bowers,
Appear no longer gay.

How oft with pleasure have I stood
To hear the gentle dove
Pour her soft murmurs from the wood
And mourn her absent love.

* * * *

But now forlorn and sad I stray,
No longer these delight!
With joy I see the setting ray
Yet dread th' approach of night.

Ah, Sylvio, dost thou now bestow
A thought on Laura's pain?
Will thy fond heart in transport glow
When here we meet again?

Then shall thy kindness ease my heart
And soothe my cares to rest?
Wilt thou, when I my doubts impart,
Remove them from my breast?

* * * *

For then each anxious care shall cease,
All jealous doubts remove;
And virtue shall detain sweet peace
To dwell in Burnham Grove."[1]

"Troubadouring again! I'll have no troubadouring here," protests the early-Victorian curmudgeon in "Trelawney of the Wells"; and thus doubtless would have protested the prosaic father. Throughout their days Richard Brinsley and his bride maintained this poetical correspondence, while their descendants were to emulate them in setting their lives to such miniature music.

Not till autumn did they quit their woodland paradise. For a time they stayed with their musical friends in Orchard Street, the Storaces; but by the next February they settled there in a house of their own.[2] Sad it was in later days to

[1] Rae, Vol. II., p. 115.

[2] Cf. *Morning Post*, February 4, 1774. Stephen Storace and his sister

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look back like wistful exiles on this vanished Eden. Our "Overture" has instanced how Sheridan sighed for the peace of that golden age. "I visited our old House at East Burnham the other day," wrote his wife to her loved Mrs. Canning, thirteen years after the honeymoon, "and I wished for you to keep me in countenance. I wept so pitifully at the sight of all my old Haunts and the ways of Happiness and Innocence. But though I have tasted the forbidden fruit since that time, I have gained the knowledge of good and evil by it." And in like manner she must have addressed her sister, for Mrs. Tickell wrote to her at the same time, "I could not help wishing myself with you at East Burnham. It would to me have been the greatest delight in the world to have strolled over all our old haunts and recollected our former pleasant Days of quiet comfort. I should have had *my* feelings too, for *you* and myself. We should have sympathised very well together. You could not help to bring back any ideas of last time *there* so well as I could." And then, turning to Sheridan, "Ah! *my dear Friend*," she laughs, "you were not *then* a Parliament Man or a Member of Brooks's, and yet I question if you have *ever* known happier Hours than those we passed at East Burnham."[1] A long interval still remained between such pure tranquillity and the disillusion which brought tragedy into their lives. Her Dick and she, we have heard her sighing, would gladly struggle against the stream, nor envy his selfish and fortunate brother. Far as yet were the fatalities and the rank luxuriance of that "high" society whither a great career was to conduct them.

> "The world was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest, and Providence their guide."

were well known as composer and singer. It should be added that the Storaces (like the Angelos, a talented family of Italian origin) were introduced to Sheridan through his wife's friend, John Hall, line engraver to George III. Hall helped the young couple in many ways. For this information the writer is indebted to one of his descendants, Mr. Hall, of Willingdon.

[1] Sheridan MSS. Mrs. Sheridan to Mrs. Stratford Canning ("Sister Christian"), "WEYMOUTH, Sunday night, Aug. 6" [1785]; Mrs. Tickell to Mrs. Sheridan, "GUNTON HALL, Wednesday" [August, 1785].

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Miss LINLEY (Mrs. Sheridan) and her brother Thomas,
from the picture at Knole.

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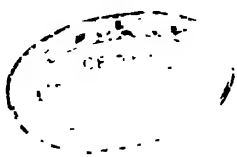

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CHAPTER VII

APOLLO'S NURSLINGS

(THE LINLEYS)

"... These be Apollo's nurselings.
Of each the notes divine in unison
Strike chords celestial."

SIGMA.

"'Tis Phœbus sure that wooes,' I cried,
'Who speaks in song, who moves in light.'"

SHERIDAN, "*Duenna*."

WHILE Sheridan and his wife rest in their "paradise," our promise must be redeemed of giving a glimpse of the Linleys. A volume would be wanted—and would be welcome—to do them justice, but here only a sketch is possible.

Readers of Disraeli's novels will remember the Baroni family in "Tancred," all musicians, all graceful, all handsome, and all artists. When Tom Linley, the eldest surviving son, was found playing his violin in the nursery and was asked whether the little man too was going to distinguish himself like the rest, "We are all geniuses here, sir," was his precocious answer.

And geniuses they all were. Had Tom lived, he would have been a great musician, as Mozart predicted when he met him in Florence. Dying in extreme youth, he left songs and anthems behind him worthy of every praise which they received. It is touching to read in the letters of his sisters, how Mary and Elizabeth clung to the memories and memorials of their young hero. Mrs. Tickell fretted herself for months when she feared that some music of his was lost, and on hearing a boy prodigy organ-playing at Norwich, her mind instantly reverted to the powers of the brother who was drowned boating at the Duke of Ancaster's, after a career which began when

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he was seven and ended when he was twenty-two. Mrs. Sheridan's elegy on him, to be quoted later, is the sweetest and saddest of all her verses. Both of the two younger brothers were gifted. Ozias—so christened after the artist, Ozias Humphry—studied metaphysics as well as music, and remained all his life as odd and absent-minded as he was clever. After graduating at Oxford — Christ Church was his college—he took holy orders, held a Norfolk living, and died "organist-fellow" of Dulwich College, which thus inherits the Linley portraits. William, the boy of Lawrence's picture, made his fortune in the East India Company's service, was educated at St. Paul's and Harrow, wrote plays and poems from childhood, played and sang admirably, and retired in 1796 from active service to cultivate literature and the arts. He competed in 1812 for the address which was to open the renovated Drury Lane Theatre.[1] As for the sisters, they were Apollo's nurslings indeed, and when Mary and Elizabeth blended their voices the effect has been described as ravishing. Mrs. Tickell, by consent of all, sang nearly as "divinely" as Mrs. Sheridan or Maria, and there is still an engraving of one of her drawings, which vied with the Duchess of Devonshire's and Mrs. Crewe's at a time when great ladies played at art, and Lady Di. Beauclerck and Mrs. Damer were artists in earnest.

Before George the First breathed his last, one William Linley (or Lingley) plied his trade of carpenter in the neighbourhood of Sheffield. Born in 1704 on the Derbyshire border, he seems to have been allied to a stock of those Yorkshire miners who have always owned the gift of song, and long after he became a man of substance, although no musician, he aired a knack of versifying which sometimes ran to satire.[2] By the age of twenty-eight he was fixed at Badminton, where he was probably employed by the Duke of

[1] His verses are given in Add. MS. 27900, f. 25. They begin "'Tis done —the war of opposition's o'er."

[2] In 1786 he published some verses which gave offence to the Sheridans (Mrs. Tickell's Corr.). Mr. Green doubts if the Linleys sprang from any other place but Badminton, but he had not seen the leaf from the Linley Bible (Sheridan MSS.), which sets his doubts at rest. (Cf. the annexed

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George Frederick, *b. circ.* March, 1753, *d.* early.	Elizabeth Ann (or Anna), *b.* at Bath, Sept. 7, 1754, *d.* at Hotwells, June 28, 1792. Buried at Wells Cathedral.	= R. B

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ufort, and about that age he married a Badmintonian three rs his senior. Only her Christian name, Maria, is known, from the fact that their eldest son Thomas married another ria, and that both Marias exhibit the same parsimony Mrs. Tickell's letters, it may be guessed that they were t-country folk and perhaps related. Two of the second ria's sons were baptised with the name of Thurston, and rston may possibly have been the surname both of Mrs. ley the first and Mrs. Linley the second.[1]

William Linley's marriage took place about 1732. He had ee children, the two elder of whom are stated in the Linley le to have been born at Badminton. The birth of Thomas, first, Mrs. Sheridan's father, took place on January 17, 3 (new style), and he was baptised two days afterwards. bel, the second child, was born on September 23, 1737; d William, the youngest (who must have died early), July 25, 1744, probably at Bath. Isabel married on tober 9, 1764, in the Abbey Church of Bath, one Richard ilpot of Wells, and thence, perhaps, dates the family con-ction with that cathedral town where Mrs. Sheridan, Mrs. ickell, their father, and the little Mary Sheridan lie buried.[2]

edigree.) Moreover, Mrs. Tickell banters the Sheridans, when on their ad to Chatworth, on the possibility of meeting relations, miners—which e spells "minors." And she received a distant kinswoman, Betty Linley lso a beauty), as a servant, and when she gave her notice, dispatched her ack to Sheffield (Mrs. Tickell's Corr.). On Mrs. Jordan's appearance in 786, she noticed, too, that she has "a leetle of the Yorkshire accent." In he current accounts from newspaper cuttings William Linley, the grand-ather, is omitted, and his career is transferred to his son Thomas, Mrs. Sheridan's father, who is made out to be a carpenter turned musician.

[1] With regard to the last, Mr. Green has suggested this likelihood in his "Linley, Sheridan, and Mathews at Bath."

[2] Sheridan's son Tom, who died at the Cape, and to whom there is a memorial tablet in Frampton Church, was believed to have been buried there also, by his own request, and the Frampton tablet records that he was laid to rest by the side of his mother. But some time since, when the vault was opened, no trace of his coffin could be found. The matter remains a mystery, and his body may have been transferred elsewhere. For evidence as to the site of the vault, etc., cf. Mr. Green's "Linley, Sheridan, and Mathews at Bath."

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Mrs. Tickell tells us, and both Sheridan and his wife, who was at the same school, confirm her, that up to the age of eleven she was educated at Wells.[1] It is possible that William Linley may have had yet another daughter, for "my aunt Deborah" (who figures in "The School for Scandal") finds mention in one of Mrs. Tickell's letters as old-fashioned in attire; but this aunt may have been the wife of the son William, of whom next to nothing can be ascertained.[2]

Thomas Linley the elder early displayed a marked talent for music. He attracted the notice of Chilcot, the Bath organist, who happened to be playing on the Duke of Beaufort's organ when William Linley was superintending some repairs. It is said that he was sent to study at Naples under Paradies; but this is extremely doubtful. At any rate, by the age of nineteen he was already in a position to support a wife, and on August 22, 1752, he was married to the Maria who has been conjectured to be a Thurston. At Bath he set up for himself as teacher and performer; nor was it long before he became known as a composer also. In 1774 he undertook the Drury Lane oratorios; in 1776 he became a joint patentee of the Theatre, and, for about a year, its sub-manager. Among others of his less known works was the music to "The Spanish Rivals," an operetta produced in 1784, the year when his daughter Maria died.

William Linley, his father, had removed to Bath about the year 1744, when the new buildings then in progress gave a scope for his trade. He rose in the world and prospered. He was at least a part [illegible]

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—no inconsiderable sum for those days.[1] Of the grandparents at "Belmont" Mrs. Tickell speaks often. Her young brother "Ozy" lodged with them in 1786, but complained so bitterly of the short commons, that both Sheridan and Tickell helped him out. Mrs. Tickell and Mrs. Sheridan often visited them, and their Christmas festivities—especially the mince pies—are chronicled with gusto. They are several times mentioned as staying at Salt Hill near Windsor, where they may have had relations, or even some property of their own. These grandparents lived to a great age and completed the fatality of their race by both dying in the same year as Mrs. Sheridan. The grandfather, on his death in October 1792, had passed his eighty-ninth year by six months, while in December of that year, when his widow died also, she had by three months exceeded her ninety-second. They were buried at Walcot.

It was on the marriage of Thomas and Maria Linley that the account in the family Bible was drawn up which is our best guide to ancestry. Poor, though suitable, rhymes—William Linley's composition—accompany each of the names. To the bride's is affixed a line, the first part of which certainly fits her: "A wife as Martha careful and as Mary wise," to the bridegroom's a set of verses commemorating "music's charm" and the season of his birthday, "Now bleak and hoary winter lowers the sky"; to Isabel's,

> "A youthful innocence with blessings find,
> And joyn'd with Prudence in your years behind."

William and Maria Linley had twelve children, all of them

Page 437, fifth line from foot of page, *for* "William" *read* "Thomas."

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to a larger house in the Crescent. With the exception of Mrs. Tickell and Mrs. Sheridan, the family birthdays must be based on the dates of baptism.[1] George Frederick (named in Handel's honour) was born in early March, 1753, and died in childhood; Elizabeth Ann, or "Anna," as it stands in a Tickell pedigree (Mrs. Sheridan), on September 7, 1754;[2] Thomas, the violinist, in early June, 1756. Then followed Mary (Mrs. Tickell), born on January 4, 1758; Thurston, who died early, in May, 1759; Samuel in June, 1760, and William Cary (also musically named) in September, 1761: he died in the October of the next year. Maria, the sweet young singer who expired when she was twenty-one, was born in September or October, 1763; Ozias Thurston in August, 1765; Jane Nash and Charlotte (nicknamed "Charles") were twins, born in January or February, 1767. Jane's singing was much admired at Deepdene, lent to the Sheridans by the Duke of Norfolk in the year of the Hastings trial. Charlotte, alluded to by Mrs. Tickell as a child with more spirit than stamina, died in early womanhood, for Mrs. Tickell speaks of her as very ill in 1786, and Mrs. Sheridan, of a recovery two years later; she is never mentioned after January, 1788, so that may be guessed to have been her death-year. William Linley, the youngest who lived the longest, was born in February, 1771. He and Ozias were the sole inmates of this "nest of linnets" who survived the summer of their days, while some of them barely attained the springtide. The latter died at Dulwich in February or March, 1831, the former in London on May 6, 1835. Jane, who eventually married Charles Ward, for a time secretary to Drury Lane Theatre, died at thirty-nine, Mrs. Sheridan before she was thirty-eight, Mrs. Tickell before she turned thirty, Thomas when he was twenty-two, and Samuel when he was twenty-one. The fates played havoc with the graces.[3]

[1] Mrs. Tickell's birthday, January 4, is recorded in her letters, and from these, conjoined with the baptismal register, Mrs. Sheridan's is fixed as on September 7.

[2] Cf. Mrs. Tickell's letter quoted *ante* in the first note of p. 184.

[3] Of their parents Thomas Linley died in London on November 19,

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MARIA LINLEY.

from an old engraving

after a picture by Westall.

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When the young Thomas Linley studied his art under Nardini in Florence at an age when most boys are struggling with grammar, he met Mozart, who was enthusiastic in his praise. Mrs. Sheridan often uses the word "fiff" to mean a small packet of news, just as her husband frequently speaks of "mat," which he introduced as "a mort" into "The Rivals." Can it be that this word "fiff" was derived through her brother from Mozart? for it is an Austrian term signifying a small measure of wine. After the Duke of Ancaster's lake had closed

1795, and was buried in Wells Cathedral. His son William composed the epitaph inscribed on the mural tablet there to his memory and that of his two elder daughters.

". . . . .
Shall I withhold what all the Virtues claim,
The sacred tribute to a Father's name?"

[And then, referring to Mrs. Sheridan:]

"And yet, blest Saint, the Skill alone was thine
To breathe with truth the tributary line;
The Mem'ry of departed worth to save,
And snatch the fading laurel from the grave.
And oh! my Sisters, peaceful be your Rest,
Once more reposing on a Father's breast,
You whom he loved, whose notes so soft, so clear,
Would sometimes wildly float upon his Ear,
As the soft Lyre he touched with mournful grace,
And recollection's tear bedewed his face.
Yes, most beloved, if every grateful Care
To sooth his hours, his every wish to share,
If the fond Mother and the tender Wife
Could add fresh comfort to his Eve of Life;
If Youth, if Beauty, Eloquence could charm,
Genius delight him, or Affection warm,
Yours was the pleasing task from day to day,
Whilst Heaven approved, and Virtue lead the way."

Mrs. Linley died on January 10, 1820, at an age probably not quite so advanced as the ninety-one years recorded on the tablet erected to her memory by William and Ozias Linley in St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden. (Cf. note to Pedigree.) She died, the son records, "In the humble Hope of a joyful Resurrection through the Merits of her Blessed Redeemer," and the tablet was raised "In grateful Remembrance of an ever-careful and indulgent Mother."

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over his body, Mrs. Sheridan thus lamented his untimely end when she herself was twenty-four:—

"ON MY BROTHER'S VIOLIN.

"Sweet instrument of him for whom I mourn,
Tuneful companion of my Lycid's hours,
How liest thou now neglected and forlorn,
What skilful hand shall now call forth thy powers?

Ah! none like his can reach those liquid notes,
So soft, so sweet, so eloquently clear,
To live beyond the touch, and gently float
In dying modulations on the ear.

Thus o'er my Lycid's lyre as I complained,
And kissed the strings where he was wont to play,
While yet in pensive sadness I remained,
Methought it sighed, and sighing seemed to say,

'Ah me! forlorn, forsaken, now no more
Shall fame and just applause around me wait;
No power my gentle Master can restore,
And I alas! will share his hapless fate.

'Fled is that spirit, chilled that youthful fire,
Which taught those strains with harmony replete,
And cold that hand which only can inspire
My senseless form to utter sounds so sweet.

'Those sounds melodious ne'er again shall please,
No tuneful strain from me shall ever flow;
Save o'er my trembling strings a sighing breeze,
To call one sad, soft note of tender woe.

'Else ah! for ever mute let me remain,
Unstrung, untuned, forgotten let me be;
Guard me from curious eye, and touch profane,
And let me rest in mournful sympathy!

'One fate with thee, dear Master, let me share:
Like thee in silent darkness let me lie;
My frame without thee is not worth my care!
With thee alone it lived, with thee shall die!'"[1]

Gainsborough's beautiful picture, now at Knole, and the pastel replica of it still at Frampton Court, immortalise the

[1] Printed in the "Annual Register" for 1784-5, together with an answer by Pratt the Della Cruscan. The same volume also contains a translation of a Hindoo love-hymn by Sir William Jones.

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THOMAS LINLEY

(Mrs. Sheridan's brother)

(from the portrait by Gainsborough in the Dulwich Gallery).

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union of these two young hearts, with that wistful foreboding in their bright, unearthly gaze which lends them the rapt intentness of a vision. For there was something hectic about the Linley talent which looks out of all their faces. Samuel too, the handsomest of the sons, wears the same expression of doom. Trained and skilful as a musician, he joined the navy, but after a brief spell of service in the *Thunderer*, returned to his parents, only to die of fever. The Linleys (who then inhabited Norfolk Street) still continued their connection with Drury Lane, and Mrs. Linley superintended its wardrobe. Among their servants, so Angelo assures us, and employed on dress-errands to the theatre, was none other than Emma Lyon, then sixteen, whom the world remembers as Lady Hamilton. She nursed the young midshipman night and day, and was so miserable when he died that she left their service. Romance hovered around each of these young lives, and premature death cut short each in turn.

It has been shown how early Mary Linley, afterwards Mrs. Tickell, was forced into public notice, and sufficient acquaintance has been made with the parents to know the reason. She and her eldest sister Elizabeth were inseparables, and neither Mrs. Sheridan's marriage, nor her own, weakened a tie beyond the wont of sisters the most akin and the most devoted. Her marriage to Richard Tickell (of a Keswick family, for a space resident at Bath) occurred on July 25, 1780, and at Wells she passed the first year after her wedding.[1] He was well connected. One of his sisters married a Berkeley, another a Cholmondeley "of Ghent"; his brother John was a clergyman. It may have been through Sheridan that Tickell first became so closely acquainted with the Linleys. With Sheridan, during the first seven years of the latter's wedded life, he was brought into close literary association. Two *brochures* made his name, "The Wreath of Fashion," published in 1774, a rhymed satire in part of which Sheridan's hand is

[1] Cf. Mrs. Sheridan's MS. statement, *post*, p. 450. For Tickell, cf. Sheridan MSS., Tickell pedigree, and many contemporary allusions. Tickell's father died on May 6, 1771, at Thornthwaite, Keswick.

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manifest, and "Anticipation," published in 1778, a smart political skit ridiculing what might be expected of the coming session. Moore was told that Sheridan always claimed a share in this performance, and from the tone and style of passages in it this is likely, the more so as his assistance during the same year in Tickell's play, "The Camp," is ascertained. Attacks on government sometimes meet with reward sooner than flatteries, and this satire on Lord North's did not preclude Tickell, three years later, from gaining a commissionership of stamps through the influence of Brummell (the Beau's father). Apartments, too, were given him in Hampton Court Palace, where the young couple resided from 1781 onwards. In the selfsame rooms, Elizabeth Sheridan, on her marriage with Henry LeFanu in 1789, was also to reside, and she has noted Mrs. Tickell's contrivance of a roped basket for conveying provisions up the stairs.[1] Afterwards they took additional quarters both in Brook and Queen Anne Streets, where they stayed from time to time during their seven years of marriage. After his wife's death in 1787, Tickell continued his palace-residence till, on November 4, 1793, he committed suicide by throwing himself over a parapet into the garden. Sheridan took good care to hush up the matter, and his friend rests, buried at Hampton.

Tickell was an ambitious eccentric. Sheridan introduced him to Fox's circle, and at times he was privileged to attend the informal councils of their party.[2] In 1785, through Sheridan again, he was elected to Brooks's, much to his wife's satisfaction, though little to her peace, in view of this fresh occasion for late hours.[3] During the absences of "the great Head," as Mrs. Tickell entitles Sheridan, he sometimes acted as his "vice-gerent" at Drury Lane.[4] It was he who composed the

[1] LeFanu MSS. Elizabeth LeFanu to her sister Alicia, "HAMPTON COURT, July, 1789."

[2] Mrs. Tickell's Corr., Sheridan MSS.

[3] "Farewell, a long farewell to all my comforts."

[4] One Younge also acted as Sheridan's understudy. In 1784 Mrs. Tickell wrote: "My poor father sat all the time with his prime minister, Younge, but no more like a manager than I to Hercules." So too acted General Burgoyne in 1786, greatly to Sheridan's annoyance.

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"Shakespeare Cento" which Mrs. Siddons delivered as the tragic Muse on the revival of Garrick's "Jubilee." He had a keen theatrical instinct and wrote several plays, two of which are familiar, "The Carnival of Venice" (1781), for which Sheridan wrote the songs,[1] and "The Camp" (1778), which was attributed to Sheridan, but of which in fact he was mainly a reviser. Tickell scribbled for the *Morning Post* and other papers, nor did he neglect to puff his brother-in-law's dramatic and political concerns. His nimble pen was useful to Fox, and from 1784 onwards he bore a part in that best of all political satires, "The Rolliad." He is said to have complained that Sheridan failed to exert himself on his behalf, but no trace of these murmurs is to be found in his wife's unreserved letters, which represent her brother-in-law as uniformly befriending him. He was not a gamester, but his temperament was speculative.[2] Most irregular both in life and habits, an able

[1] The Gondolier's song was long popular:—

"And while the moon shines on the stream,
And as soft music breathes around,
The feathering oar returns the gleam
And dips in concert to the sound."

Another begins in the style of "The Duenna":—

"By adverse fate when beauty sighs,
A mingled claim our bosoms prove;
'Tis virtue graced with tenderer ties,
'Tis pity softened into love."

But the best is:—

"The gentle primrose of the vale,
Whose tender bloom rude winds assail,
Droops its meek leaves, and scarce sustains
The night's chill snow, and beating rains.
'Tis past, the morn appears, sweet spring
Returns, and hills and valleys sing—
But low the gentle primrose lies,
No more to bloom—no more to rise."

Cf. "Memoirs of Mrs. Crouch," Vol. I., pp. 107—109. In the last, Mrs. Sheridan, I think, must have had a hand.

[2] Among other speculations he embarked in the Colchester oyster trade, and he dabbled in lotteries. Mrs. Tickell says, in 1783, he had "got an undrawn ticket in the Wheel of Fortune. Fortune, if thou would'st be good-natured for once, how very happy we would be!"

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Bohemian, he was always impecunious, and, like their joint friend Richardson, a sort of Sheridan *in petto*. Their kind of sentimentality was his. When his wife died, he begged that his resolve to remain a widower should be inscribed on the tablet at Wells. Yet within two years, and under circumstances which forfeited Mrs. Sheridan's friendship, he had married a young girl, Miss Ley, the daughter of an "East-Indiaman Captain," and for a time his three children had to find a home with the Sheridans; his daughter Betty, by her marriage with an Indian official, became the mother of Arthur Roebuck, the statesman. Tickell's ungainly build resembled Hare's, as his wife remarked when their "profiles," or silhouettes, were taken: "Oh, *che figura!*" she exclaimed. Like Sheridan and Richardson, he played the wildest pranks, many of which are chronicled in the letters which this brief abstract may serve to preface. Despite a generosity that endeared him to his wife and commended him to Lord John Townshend, his path in life proved distraught and aimless.[1] That wife's failing health was sorely tried by the rash courses which chequered a warm affection warmly returned: and Elizabeth Sheridan, when she met her again in 1785, noticed that her beauty, which had once rivalled Mrs. Sheridan's, was well nigh wrecked,[2] a beauty still bright on Gainsborough's canvas and Romney's.[3]

Her letters to that sister are amongst the most delightful of

[1] Miss Ley has been confused with the highly respectable Miss Lee, authoress of "The Canterbury Tales," who, with her sister, kept a school at Bath, and one of whose adaptations from the German prompted Byron's "The Deformed Transformed." After Mrs. Sheridan's death Miss Lee taught little Betty Tickell. Tickell's second marriage took place at Willingdon, near Eastbourne, but he compromised his bride before the marriage. That marriage, he assured Mrs. Sheridan, would never take place; yet that very evening, after a party at Mrs. Crewe's, the post-chaise was in waiting for his elopement. He had a natural son before his marriage, whom his first wife received and cared for. Among several literary works of his that Mrs. Tickell the first mentions, is an adaptation of "The Sorrows of Werther."

[2] LeFanu MSS.

[3] In one of her letters of 1784 Mrs. Tickell writes that Mrs. Canning dined with her after "sitting to Romney."

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Mrs. TICKELL,

from an old engraving

after the portrait by Cosway.

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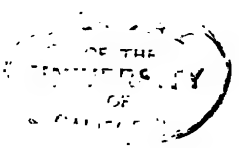

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their day. Their blend of playfulness and pathos, their informal "well, ma'ams" and "well, sirs," their intimacies heightened by the little language which the sisters shared and which Sheridan came to copy, their *esprit*, perfect sincerity and flexible expressiveness, invest them with a peculiar charm. None but a Linley, and a Linley writing to a Linley, could have written them. For the Linleys regarded themselves as a club apart. An adoption into it, she calls a privilege, and she also dwells on "the spirit of the Linleys." Their little language is even tenderer than Swift's to Stella, "God thee bless." "Comfort 'ee up," "Don't be angy wig us, madam," "There, my dear friend, e'eth have all the thick of it," "tumfy" for comfortable, and "sickirts" for sick, may stand as specimens. And Mrs. Tickell has her own names and phrases for things and people: "Signior Wisky Wosky Something," to hit off a diplomatist, "driven in by the weather from Denmark," to "bepuppy" for to scold, and "pane-tiddle" for playing the fool. Mrs. Canning, too, caught these phrases of her friends. "Well, good-bye and Goddy bless you," is the close of one of her epistles.

The surviving correspondence dates only from the late summer of 1783 to the opening of 1787, the year of her death; and it may be hoped that one day it will be given entire to the world. We view the whole environment of the Hampton Court "Tabbies" and "country misses," their balls and card-parties, in which, like Mrs. Sheridan at the greater houses, Mary Tickell is usually "picked to the bone"; their expectation, too, of being honoured by the company of Fox as a friend of Sheridan's and of the Norths, Townshends, Hobarts and Fawkeners, with whom they consorted; the retail trade in scandal of the fine and sordid world which forms the background. We catch echoes of the stage thunder and mock serenades of His Royal Lowness the Prince of Wales, then in the flush of peccadillo—the prince who was "not delicate" in his amours.[1] We seem for a while to live in the Tickell *ménage*,

[1] In 1784, too, Mrs. Tickell tells a story about the husband of "his present passion, Mrs. Hodges." The Prince made Hodges keep a seat for him at the House of Commons, while he went off to the lady.

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the husband perpetually in town with Sheridan, returning at all hours and in all conditions, yet supervising every detail of the small establishment with his own hands; transforming the drawing-room for a "drum," and drilling Stephen the pantry-boy, who frolics, later, as a beau below-stairs at a servants' gala. "My good gentleman" brings down the theatrical hacks and political dark horses, writers and middlemen who work behind the scenes. There is Richardson, that Admirable Crichton who shadows Sheridan, and whose "*gaucheries* are beyond all calculation." There is Lawrence, author, jurist, dramatic critic, member of parliament, invincible satirist and initiator of the "Rolliad"; fat, immovable, who "takes possession of the room." There is one Snaggs, a Drury Lane rhymester—"yes, verily the monster Snaggs"—whom she finds sprawling on her hearthrug and mouthing out his "twelve-hours-round" verses. Oh, how she loathes these self-invited guests, who come at morning and stay till midnight![1] There is the lean Isaac Reid, a critic and journalist, whom she christens the "demi-semi-quaver"; Tickell takes him the devil's gallop in Richmond Park and laughs as he knocks his head against the trees. Tickell and Richardson are always playing off practical jokes on each other and on Reid. And there are the large fish as well as the small fry: old George Selwyn, with his last *bon mot*, shrewd Storer, virtuoso and Whig satellite, a crabbed "Pgrunt" [? "Pig-grunt"] over the card table, but an Adonis of fifty years as he skips round the ball-room; facile Fitzpatrick, Fox's kinsman and factotum, and the two court ladies, flaunting Miss Jeffries and boring Miss Boss, who —"the tender Virgin," she styles her—was a pet aversion, for Mrs. Tickell was an excellent hater.

The political waters, too, are lightly skimmed in these pages. We can watch the King turning his back on Charles Fox when the Ministry stumbles out in the winter of 1783, the Queen sneering sardonically as her husband snubs his scapegrace son

[1] On one of these evenings she withdrew in dudgeon, and Tickell, finding that Snaggs had received a £70 note, threw it on to the coals and insisted on leaving it there to see which way the wind blew.

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by the fireplace; Burke ('tis a dead secret), "the great co-patriot of your Charles," actually abetting Pitt's India Bill and so early as 1784 suspected as a renegade; Burke's son, entering St. Paul's Church with his hat on (there is, she says, a mad strain in all that family), and being turned out by the vergers, whom she spells "verdures" before good spelling grew fashionable. We can touch a thread or so of the tangled negotiations for Pitt's French commercial project of 1786, in which Tickell, an out-and-out "Fox-hound," most learnedly instructs his wife. And she, as befits a party woman, rejoices when the great minister's wisest measure is thwarted. She discloses the establishment of a new Whig club—probably the "Esto Perpetua"—five years before *the* famous "Whig Club" was founded. Nor is she without judgment in politics. She can think for herself, as when she differs from Tickell on the advisability of Fox's junction with Pitt in 1784; and she can laugh for herself also. "It is imagined by some," she writes at the end of that year, "that there will be an early division upon the very interesting question of who shall speak first, Fox or Pitt."

Often and often they drive to town for the sights and theatres, for much-needed medical advice, for the comfort of the old parents in Norfolk Street. We can witness the wonders of Blanchard's balloon, and the sensation of Lunardi's;[1] the *début* of Mrs. Jordan, whom Fitzpatrick tries to criticise away, but who enchants the town with her boyish slimness and irresistible laughter;[2] the triumphs, too, of Mrs. Siddons, who seems "Kemble in petticoats"; the revival of "The School for Scandal" in 1783, "with the greatest applause that ever I heard it since the first night"; that of "The Critic" in 1785, again acclaimed but needing the "pruning-knife"; the snug oyster suppers in Fosbrook's Drury Lane box-office; the fluctuations of the theatre, now in the skies, now in the depths,

[1] Lunardi published an account with plates, and presented copies with his autograph to his noble patrons. He gave a ball at the Pantheon for the Duchess of Devonshire. (Tickell Corr.)

[2] Her first London appearance was on October 18, 1785, as "Peggy" in "The Country Girl." Cf. Boaden's "Life," Vol. I., p. 69.

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constantly suffering from "something in the settlement way,"[1] and from a partisan king, who cavils at his son's province and patronises Covent Garden.[2] Picturesque presences abound. Impulsive Gainsborough, the family-worshipper, steps in and out of the scene, cheering old Linley, regarding all his offspring as pictures, and retouching his portrait of the two girls which symbolises them by a carpet of primroses and violets, and the light on their faces irradiating the dark, mysterious grove around them.[3] When Mrs. Sheridan tells her sister of a village prize-fight, the sister at once wishes that Gainsborough had been there to paint it.

Mrs. Tickell's society, though near the rose, was not the rose itself, and she is eager to glean all the news of the great houses frequented by the Sheridans, of Chatsworth and Althorp, Crewe Hall, Delapré Abbey and Wynnstay. And "my dear friend," the daily greater Sheridan, how she teases him about his feats, his accidents on horseback or in flirtation ("Charlotte and Amoret, Amoret and Charlotte, hey?"), about his prized but sadly Protean attentions, though "I in particular am one who thinks you can't be half kind enough to Sheridan." She begs for "one of his perfect poems," and when he is misreported by Woodfall, she vows that the offender "ought to be tossed in a blanket." When the "nightly consultations" of his party keep him up "beyond credibility," it is she who makes him promise to "go home

[1] In 1784 Mrs. Tickell says, "How this distress is to end I don't know, but they expect S—— every minute, so I suppose he'll set them to rights."

[2] In 1785 that son, however, turned traitor to Drury Lane, to Mrs. Tickell's high indignation.

[3] This picture of the Misses Linley is in the Dulwich Gallery. Gainsborough "mended" it, greatly to Mrs. Tickell's delight, during 1785. Gainsborough painted Mrs. Sheridan separately at least twice. He also painted her husband and their son Tom. Mrs. Tickell writes of this last portrait—which is now at Frampton Court—that his "little lordship looked out of the frame to the life." In 1783 Mrs. Tickell also says that "Old Conway" had been at Gainsborough's and had "come away brimfull of him." His adoption of a boy simply because he resembled the Linleys, and his visit to cheer up "old Tommy" (Linley), have been already mentioned.

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ELIZABETH ANN LINLEY (Mrs. Sheridan)

and her sister Mary (Mrs. Tickell)

(from the picture by Gainsborough in the Dulwich Gallery)

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directly and to bed"; and when theatrical riots happen, it is Sheridan's presence that she requires, for he would not suffer "such impudence." Yet amid all these baubles it is her home, her "little minikins," her sister and parents, her erring husband—"my own Hump," she calls him—and their gentle friend, Mrs. Stratford Canning, in her quiet cottage at Putney, that form the centre of all these dissolving views. She will not let Tickell frisk it alone at the Crewes' or the Wynnes' who invite him without her. She adores her "dear, dear cuddykin" little Bess, yet will not blind herself to her faults, for the child is headstrong and spoiled by grandpapa, who sends for her, "watch at side, and lets nobody contradict her." Every lisped word is treasured while the mother guides her tiny hand in postscripts to her dearest "Auntie Hai," and to her "very dear friend" Sheridan. She is proud, too, of her spirited "Sam," and when her small Dick (nicknamed "Socrates") is inoculated for the small-pox, who so gallant, so quick in answer to his nurse, so tenderly cherished? Her nephew Tom, also—whom she destined to marry her daughter—how she dwells on his looks and cleverness, the lover-like letter he writes to her when he is nine, and his saucy thanks when she presents him with a toy "Plantarium" on his birthday. Tom was petted and spoiled. During the holidays he was even cast for the part of Jessamy in General Burgoyne's "Bon Ton," but Sheridan resented any family association with the theatre, and the reader will recollect how incensed he was two years later when it was rumoured that his wife would act Ariel in the private theatricals at Wynnstay. For Mrs. Sheridan there is nothing that her sister will not do or suffer. When their father gives her money she begs to surrender it. She dwells on her every triumph, she implores her to abate the racket of late hours and to cease turning night into day, she fears for her health at every turn. When she journeys in the winter she sends her the cosiest *sabots* to protect her feet from the cold. She is always, as it were, feeling her pulse and taking her temperature.[1] And

[1] Among other passages, "I want you to lay in a *natural* stock of roses," and "I shall have some talk with Sheridan about you, for he very much

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how archly she rallies her on her precarious grandeur—"great preparations for winter assemblies" in Bruton Street, "windows down to the ground with oak frames to them; upon my word, ma'am, you are quite the Queen Bee of the family." She delights in contrasts. "Perhaps you may think you live well at Chatsworth," she tells her; "but, oh Lord, if you could but see how fine we are now with our *two* servants in waiting, and all the Dishes under covers shining bright as your silver, albeit they *be tin!* I assure you we seldom dine without a made Dish, sometimes '*Hashee de mouton*' or '*Hashee du Beef*,' very often *Fricassed Rabbits* and *Broilo Bono*. Then we are so regular; why, Tickell is grown as bad as Lord Palmerston, and if the Side Dishes, which are always the Butter Boats, are but turned about, he is *enragé* for the rest of the Dinner." She rejoices when Mrs. Sheridan is in quieter if duller quarters. She cannot gaze at a lovely landscape near Norwich where Dean Lloyd lived—*her* dean—without longing that Sheridan and his wife were near to share her pleasure.

She loves and quizzes each member of her family, she befriends and houses them all. Now it is poor Maria, rebelling against routine, dressing herself in a man's *surtout*, and "sleeping out" at her friend Miss Troward's.[1] Now it is "Jen" whom she counsels and consoles, with whom she reads, for

mistakes if he thinks keeping you from the Playhouse is to keep you in good health. . . . But, indeed, dear Betsy, if you insist on going to Bed at three, breakfasting at two, and dining at six, and taking no Exercise, you never can expect to recover your health." Sheridan's late hours tried his wife also.

[1] Probably the daughter of Garrick's solicitor. This rebellion happened towards the close of her brief life. There was a dispute with the grandparents about her tomb and inscription. Cf. Tickell Corr., Sheridan MSS. Several dirges were written in her memory by friends:

"Larded with all sweet flowers,
She bewept to the grave did go
With true love-showers."

Cf. "Linley, Sheridan and Mathews at Bath," pp. 9—12. Mrs. Sheridan, too, paid her tribute to Maria. "I think," Mrs. Tickell told her, "that next to the Poem on Bet—you know I never give up that—they are some of the sweetest lines you ever wrote."

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whom she schemes and matchmakes. Now it is "Philosopher," and star-gazing "Ozy," who fancies he meets the ghost of Charles I. under the Hampton Court arches. Now it is "Bill," "the genius of the family," in whose first poem—on "Westminster Abbey"—she exults. As for the old parents—"Baucis and Philemon," or "Phyllis and Corydon"—they are perpetually under her roof, he with music to last a fortnight, and she poring over accounts and newspapers. Mrs. Linley was indeed a trial, stinting even the mourning when Maria died, furious over the mounting of the theatre, chaffering over her cards, "cribbaging," as Mrs. Tickell terms it, everything that her careful hand could clutch, scolding and scandalising, yet loyal withal and courageous.[1] Heart-rending bereavement bravely borne forged the link of sympathy between the shrewd old campaigner and her romantic offspring, though even bereavement could not abate her foibles or slake her thirst for cards. Down she swoops on Hampton Court in her "blue poplin," "determined to play whist though I told her she won't have the least chance with the 'Tabbies.'" Constant sorrows mellowed the passionate and unbending father also. The tears started to his eyes whenever his pupils sang an air that his Tom or Maria had sung.[2] His "glooms" deepened as one by one the children faded away, but he found solace in the loving care of Mrs. Tickell and Mrs. Sheridan. We see him "sitting very melancholy in his own room" attired in "his worsted nightcap and Persian Robe," happy at length to have received a letter from

[1] In an informal will drawn up by Mrs. Sheridan and remaining among the Sheridan papers, she stipulates that a gown bequeathed to a servant shall not pass through Mrs. Linley's hands. When "The Jubilee" was revived at Drury Lane in 1785, Mrs. Linley "rummaged up an old rusty black sword of Father's for somebody." In 1785, while the Linleys were servantless, she would not even hire a charwoman to assist poor Charlotte in the housework. Sheridan's sister Elizabeth, who met her again when the Sheridans were in Deepdene in 1789, describes her clacking and boastful tongue as intolerable.

[2] Cf. "Memoirs of Mrs. Crouch," Vol. I., pp. 78, 79, and the lines in W. Linley's epitaph, *ante*, p. 439.

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Sheridan. His Mary was often with him in Norfolk Street, and here at the close of 1784 occurred a scene which must be quoted, for it introduces old Sheridan on his highest stilts to the fury of the Linley household, whose head, if less arrogant, was not less obstinate:[1]

". . . We were near losing our Box [at the theatre] last night. At supper my father said William Thompson [Sheridan's old servant] had been speaking to him to have it for old Mr. Sheridan, Betsy [Elizabeth Sheridan], and a young Lady from the Country, and he seemed very desirous they should have it—so my Mother fired up—you know how well she loves the old Gentleman, and said as I was in Town and not in a condition to bear squeezing, she could not think of giving up her Box, that your's [Mrs. Sheridan's] was very much at his service, and she should be very happy to have Miss Sheridan's company with us. This I own I thought very reasonable, especially at so short a Notice, and that Notice only conveyed thro' William Thompson [the servant], without deigning to send even a note about it. But my Father grew peremptory and rude—*so then up speaks my little i*, and settles it in an instant, for I cannot say I felt very much pleased to be turned out of the Box merely to give old Surly Boots a convenient seat, because the Boxes being so near there was quite room for Betsy with us, and the Country Cousin and old Crusty may sit together; so my Mother is gone to the House this morning to settle it all."

She was as readily moved to tears as to wrath, and in this *trait*, once more, she resembled her sister. On the road to Chatsworth Mrs. Sheridan had once met some poor little "Coal Beggars," whom she helped. This incident affected Sheridan also, who intended to have worked it up into a play. "I don't wonder," wrote Mrs. Tickell in her letter-journal, "that you piped your eye, for *my* eyes rather twinkled at the description." And she

[1] "You know how monstrous obstinate our good Parent is." Mrs. Tickell's Corr. (1786). Towards the end of the same year little Sam is "very frightened" at his grandfather's "black looks." But he, too, could be sentimental, and when the Sheridans sent him verses from Wynnstay in 1785, he "felt the lump rise in his throat," though he owned himself "ashamed at such exquisite feelings."

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showed true charity. When the "Tabbies" clawed a young and misused wife who had gone astray, "Indeed, poor woman," wrote Mrs. Tickell, "she looks and *seems* so unhappy that a Stone would find some humanity for her, but that's not the failing of your true Purrers." Nor in this connection should be omitted an experience of hers at the Norwich Assizes, for it is characteristic alike of her bent and feelings, as well as of the brutality that still prevailed:

"I had only the satisfaction of hearing one poor wretch condemned for stealing some Table-linen. However I believe he was an old offender. He had the most picturesque appearance you can conceive. . . . I should not have imagined him a hardened offender. . . . I'm afraid I am going to be very wicked when I describe his Face and Figure to resemble very much some portrait of our Saviour, but he really did, and I was not the only Person in Court who made the observation, shocking as it may seem to you who are so very good. He had just that mild look of Pity & Benevolence, & his Hair parted at the top of his head waved down his face & was of the palest brown. He was dressed in a very clean *white* linen Coat, and his countenance was very near as pale, though very expressive. In short, he was as fine a figure of an injured Saint as you could suppose, yet he was condemned to die and never changed countenance at the dreadful Sentence, or showed the smallest anxiety when the Jury came in to give their Verdict (for they doubted half an hour). . . . I don't know whether my Imagination helped me out a little, but I really was never so struck with anything in my life as with the Behaviour & Appearance of this man."

In contrast with this picture let us look at another not less graphic in a lighter tone—her description of a card-room supper at one of the Hampton balls:

". . . The Tabbies came in and deplored the profaneness of violating their sanctuary for such vulgar purposes. They drew up in a melancholy line opposite us Supperers, and I began immediately playing with the dishes as if they were cards. 'Pray, Colonel North, is Liver to a Wing good?' No—well four

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pots of porter are fourteen however, and then we changed our game. We were three by Lobsters and two by Craw fish—and then fifteen Lamb, fifteen Ham and a pair of Pidgeons were six, and one . . . for cold goose. The Tabbies were indignant, but we played out our Supper very merrily."

This is brisk enough, but the next excerpt, with its satirical dream and allegorical puns on the duke who was the party figure-head, is no bad sample of her playful fancy. In 1785 she, Mrs. Sheridan and their husbands went a pleasure-trip to Weymouth and onwards. They wrote a letter-diary for their best friend, Mrs. Canning, the birth of whose famous son, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, at Putney, is afterwards chronicled by Mrs. Sheridan; and on this journey it was that Sheridan composed the romantic fragment quoted at this volume's opening.[1] "We went," runs the passage, "to the Isle of Portland yesterday, literally a stone quarry of five miles long. It is a fine thing that the Head of Whigs takes his title from the largest stones in England—good materials for new *Piers* & their erections, no flimsy lath & plaister ones, but like Pompeii Pillars, a shaft like a steeple & suitable supportings. The mutton there is of the other extreme, but equally significant of the slight fare and scanty dress of these hardened opponents whom the Duke heads,—the soil barren, but boldly buffeting the billows—not a tree to be seen, no shadowy, pensive-like umbrage to shield the tempest-tost patriot,—a few exhausted fields with mortgaged crops of scanty corn—and only two Lighthouses (Bulstrode & Wentworth) to hold forth a glimmering Beacon to the sinking smuggler. There is a Cave where in the midst of dashing waves & all the tumult of the winds, some sable cormorants hold their daily meeting. I saw too a dark Grey bird with small eyes and prominent beak, a large Yellow Puffin, an emaciated Curlew & a consumptive Crow. The dissonant notes, the jarring cries, the hungry sea-caws confused, then stunned, then overcame my senses. I fell asleep. The Cave changed to Becket's [the bookshop where the "Esto Perpetua" Club assembled], the ink-stained copyist

[1] Cf. *ante*, p. 95.

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Lawrence with his Peck [*i.e.*, sly glance], Richardson with his paunch—Birds without any, and—Courtney. I should have dozed on but for dreaming that Becket had lost his case, which woke me just as a cross Jackass was passing by braying from impatience and famine."[1] And as a pendant to this Mrs. Sheridan's account of the Palmerstons, after a stay at Broadlands on the same journey, may be quoted:—"There you would have seen a very beautiful Place, a comfortable House, a good-natured poetical, stuttering Viscount, & a pleasing unaffected woman who, tho' she *did* squeeze through the City Gates into a Viscountess, wears her blushing honours without shaking them at you every moment. There you would have seen Waterworks by Day & Fireworks by Night. . . ."

Once again, before the terrible scourge of consumption carried off Mrs. Tickell as it was to carry off Mrs. Sheridan, the two sisters rambled together, this time as far as Devonshire. When they reached Exeter at nightfall, they heard suddenly that their father was there. In a moment they resolved to surprise him. They were told that he would be returning from a friend's house through a lane under the moonlight. They stopped their chaise, changed their clothes and voices, and accosted him in loud and forward tones, to his shocked surprise, and eventual joy when he found that the supposed minxes were his own dear daughters. The letter detailing this escapade to Mrs. Canning is too long for insertion: Tickell and Sheridan added a postscript of the awful and ingenious curses on the roads and postboys.

Her sprightly humour and sweet gaiety were always welcome in the Sheridan household, and an instance is afforded outside these letters by her brother William. In 1781 she and he joined a New Year's jollification at Bruton Street. After supper, Sheridan proposed that every guest should "epigrammatise" on some new book or topic. Hayley's "Triumphs of Temper" had just appeared, and Mrs. Tickell at once struck off

[1] The allusions are to Lawrence and Richardson, already mentioned as collaborators in the "Rolliad." Courtney was the old wit of the House of Commons. Becket's "case" refers to legal proceedings in connection with the satire against Rolle and the Pittites.

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the following epigram, than which, said Linley, "Martial never scribbled a better":—

"With female patience here's to do,
Serence and her trials three!
Now, I have *read the poem through*,
What d'ye think of me?"[1]

The sadness of her premature death is deepened by such memories.

That end approached too soon. She had long been ailing and concealing her malady. In piteous letters to Mrs. Canning Mrs. Sheridan recounts the slow stages of the treacherous disease, the hopes deferred, the tragic progress to the Hot Wells, the more than tenderness of both husbands, her resolve never to disclose the hopelessness of the case to one whose pure life needed no preparation for death, her own struggles to be resigned. Even then Mrs. Tickell tried to cheer her sister, and when her hand could scarce obey her will, sent her a pathetic note from her death-bed: "Mrs. Tickell presents her Compliments to Mrs. Sheridan, and thinks it would be no ill use of her time if she copied the above for her improvement after Breakfast." Under this, Mrs. Sheridan has written, "The last lines written by her Dear Hand a few Days only before her Death, to prove to me that she was still able to write to me." Four years after she had passed away that heart-broken sister thus commemorated her in the pathetic lines which preface the letters that she treasured:—"On the 27th of July [1787], she ceased to suffer, and I for ever lost the Friend and Companion of my youth—the beloved Sister of my Heart whose sweet and amiable qualities endeared her to all who were so happy as to know her. She died in the 29th year of her age, universally regretted and lamented—and was buried in the Cathedral at Wells, where she spent her Infancy & where she enjoyed Happiness in Poverty the first year of her marriage. In less than two years afterwards Mr. Tickell married again a beautiful young woman of eighteen!!! The dear children remained with me till that time. The Boys were then taken down to their Father. The Girl—the dying

[1] William Linley's letter is given by Angelo in his "Picnic," p. 164.

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legacy of her ever dear & lamented Mother—is still mine and constitutes all my Happiness.

"E. A. S., Augst 24th: 1791."

There are tears surely in these voices. She wept for her sister and would not be comforted, and when she revisited the spot near Brandon Hill, where each of them had spent her school days, she broke down and sobbed aloud.[1] She wore her miniature by Cosway next to her heart till her dying day, and bequeathed it to the niece whom she had so fondly cherished. Her epitaph on Mary Tickell still remains among the Sheridan papers:—

"You who have mourned the sister of your Heart,
The dear companion of your youthful years,
Pass not regardless. Drop ere you depart
On this sad spot your tributary tears.
For here the sweetest friend for ever lies,
The best, the kindest, loveliest and beloved,
Whose cheerful spirit brightened in her eyes
And graced those virtues which her life approved.
Modestly wise and innocently gay
She lived, to my grieved Heart a blessing given
Till God approving, from its beauteous Clay,
Called the pure Spirit to its native Heaven."[2]

Only five years later, under almost exactly the same circumstances, and but one month earlier in the year, Mrs. Sheridan rejoined her sister in that Cathedral vault. They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided.

Little space has been left for Mrs. Sheridan herself. She has been heard already, and will often be heard again in these pages;

[1] Cf. Sheridan's Letter of 1792 to the Duchess of Devonshire, App., Vol. II.

[2] Another epitaph, possibly by Tickell, also remains among the Manuscripts: "Epitaph on Mrs. Tickell, whose beauty of *form and face can* only be equalled by that of her voice:—

"'To charm with heavenly sound a mortal ear,
A sample of the joys we may attain,
God lent awhile a warbling cherub here,
But missed her song and snatched her back again.'"

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nor are Mary's letters without sidelights on her sweet companion. She was more quick-tempered than her sister, though both of them could fire up on occasion. The same qualities with a little less *verve*, and a little more elegance distinguish her letters also. Like Mrs. Tickell's, they are full of life—a sad irony for women marked out from birth for an early death. Not many addressed to Mrs. Tickell survive, but the Sheridan papers abound in letters to Sheridan, and to Mrs. Canning, her "Sister Christian." More of the political scene rises before us, and there are many sketches of the high society in which she moved, and which towards the last she came to loathe. These letters breathe the most affectionate devotion to her husband. Three of such utterances have been already quoted. In another, while she waited for him all summer at Delapré Abbey ("Diddlepe," as little Bess Tickell lisped it), she yearns for his strong arms to support her, and the caressing tones that would heal her head and heart-aches. She calls him her own Dick, her dearest boy. She exhausts all the endearing terms of her baby language. She will "kiss 'ee up ever so." She partakes his triumphs, forgives, and ignores his lapses. For Sheridan, she reads the plays that pour in to be examined, translates others, keeps accounts, writes songs, makes suggestions: she is his bright consoler and industrious right hand.[1] As time goes on, her own life darkens, not only from bereavement and her husband's failings, but, as will be found, from her own sad errors also. Only towards the close are the two friends lovers again

[1] We have already noted in the opening chapter the reference in Mrs. Tickell's letters to an operetta by Mrs. Sheridan. Among the Sheridan papers is one which seems to answer to this description—possibly the "Haunted Village," which Moore mentions as hers in his "Journal." It is called "Rural Amours," and here is one of its songs:—

"The youth who unregarded mourns,
And does unpitied languish,
Whose heavy heart feels no returns
Of joy, but constant anguish,
Sure, such a wretch so cursed with woe
Should crave the lenient stroke of Death,
In hopes to find the friendly blow
Would end his sorrows with his breath."

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as they were of yore. Never, it was said, did Sheridan adore his wife so passionately as during the last few years of his life, and this is confirmed by his out-pourings in our new letters to the Duchess and her sister.[1] She had longed for a daughter ("a little badge of affection," she puts it in a secret letter), and her prayer was granted during the last year of her life; but the child survived her for barely more than a year. All her props somehow crumbled or vanished, all but two close friends, a Mrs. Leigh and that Mrs. Canning, whom in her "will" she styles her dearest friend outside her own family. Since we shall have to reveal how even her white soul did not escape unsullied by the corrupt society around her, since, too, with that episode Mrs. Canning is connected, a few lines may be devoted to her here.

She was born Mehetabel, or "Hetty," Patrick, a charming Irish-woman who never divested virtue of its grace, and illustrated Burke's maxim that what we love should be lovely. She married Stratford, or "Stratty," Canning,[2] Sheridan's "most amiable" friend (the banker, who was half ruined in 1786), and thus she came into close intimacy with the Sheridans. This intimacy was continued to the younger generation. Canning it was who sent his nephew George, the future prime minister, to Eton and Oxford, while his wife gave him a mother's affection and the happiest home. George and young Tom Sheridan were early friends, and his brother Will followed Tom to the same private school at Salt Hill. There Mrs. Tickell and the Sheridans visited and treated both of them, as they afterwards visited

[1] Cf. *post*, Vol. II., Ch. IX., and the letters themselves transcribed in the Appendix.

[2] Stratford Canning was the third son of Lieutenant-Colonel Canning of Garvagh, the uncle of the great Minister, George, the father of the great Ambassador, his namesake, and the great-uncle of Charles, the Governor-General of India. He was partner in the merchant-banking firm of French, Borroughes & Co., which fell into difficulties a year or two before he died in 1787. His portrait by Romney, which did not come home till the year after his death, was only paid for in 1802, when the artist himself had died. Romney also painted a fine portrait of Mrs. Canning and one of her children. The Cannings' London abode was their place of business in the heart of the city, but their real residence was at Putney.

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and treated young George at Eton. George's mother, too, the actress who led a tattered life, was seen and pitied by Mrs. Sheridan on one of her visits to Chester. Hetty Canning's devotion to her friend remained unclouded, with one strange interval, to the close, and then it knew no bounds. To accompany Sheridan's dying wife to the Hot Wells she quitted all her children at a moment when she was most needed. He calls her the best woman in the world.[1] No happier days were spent by Mrs. Sheridan or her sister than at the pretty cottage in Clement's Lane near Putney Hill. There they took counsel together and discussed the wicked world. There they read aloud, or played a jog-trot game of cribbage. There Mrs. Sheridan, in Quaker parlance, styled and signed herself "Patience Pure." To "Sister Christian" Mrs. Sheridan thus unbosomed herself in 1785, while on a visit at Delapré, succeeding one at Chatsworth, with its wonted tale of heavy losses from the devil's picture-books:

". . . I profit by the leisure allowed me to assure my dear Hetty that though I have been so long surrounded by Beauty, Fashion, and Rank and everything that has a *right* to charm, I feel that the *first* and nearest friend of my Heart is a certain Christian Woman in a Cottage at Putney, where I have been more truly happy with an interesting Book close to the Fire (especially when she is not sleepy), than in the midst of all the Gaiety & Magnificence of Chatsworth." She could not see her as often as she wished. They were like "the man and the woman in the Weather House," she told her, "the moment I appear, you are to vanish it seems." Every inmost thought was imparted to this friend of friends, and our meagre extracts must conclude with a letter to her of 1788, the year after they had each been desolated. It presents Mrs. Sheridan's philosophy of grief:

". . . My fine London friends will probably take advantage of my situation to procure a little refreshment from the wear and tear of dissipation and enable them to launch out again with new spirit. . . . You mistake me, my Dear Woman, if you supposed I congratulated you on recovering your tranquillity,

[1] Cf. *post*, Vol. II., Ch. IX., and the letters in the Appendix.

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& that I had an Idea that you had ceased to cherish that right and tender sorrow so dear to the memory of your dear Stratty. Everybody who knew him, who was acquainted with his kind good Heart & amiable qualities, must lament the loss of such a man, such a Friend—how much more strongly then must you, the Partner of his Heart, feel. But time & the conviction of his Happiness *ought* &, I trust, *has* restored you to that tranquillity which will enable you once more to find Pleasure in the Society of your & his Friends, and to fulfil the many Duties of your Situation in this Life with cheerful resignation. This is all I meant & all that was imagined by those who told me that you were more tranquil. It is what I feel myself—though I do not think our Misfortunes equal—yet I am sure you will own, mine has been very bitter, the severest I have ever known. God forbid I should live to experience greater affliction! But tho' I never shall forget or cease eternally to lament my Dear Mary, I can now find amusement in my different occupations which I could not in the first Passion of my Grief, & can mix in the Society of my Friends without wrapping them in the gloom of my Sorrows. In my solitary Hours I am more selfish, but my reflections are calm though sorrowful, & I can think and talk of my beloved Sister very often with Composure & without Tears. It will grieve me to find you have not acquired this Repose from Misery, & I think it is a duty which we owe all the dear connections which remain to us, to attain by every effort both of Reason & Religion."

Such a passage strikes deep. At first she had raised the wail of Job, and now half through Mrs. Canning's unseen influence, half by her own inherent faith, she had regained tranquillity and strength of mind. Willingly, did space permit, would we have pictured more of a figure so sympathetic as Mrs. Sheridan. All that can be done is to give a general impression that may stand for much behind it. The Linleys form a group almost unique in their generation. It is not often that nature has been so lavish at once to so many, or that art has added so little to the divine right of genius.

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CHAPTER VIII

UP THE LADDER

(1773 to 1775)

"Odds, whips and wheels, I've travelled like a comet with a tail of dust all the way as long as the Mall."—"*Bob Acres*," *in* "*The Rivals*."—SHERIDAN.

INSTALLED in their new abode, the Sheridans soon began to attract society. The "Saint's" voice was the magnet, and, on her recovery from an illness, it was advertised (quite in old Sheridan's manner) that the Orchard Street Concerts would be given "twice a week to the Nobility and Gentry."[1] The fact that Mrs. Sheridan had refused so many public offers enhanced this private opportunity, and fashion flocked to the parties for which a music room at the back of the house was fitted up. No money was taken for these performances. Of this Miss LeFanu assures us, nor is her assurance needful. The man who would not suffer his bride to sell her voice to strangers, would scarcely brook a livelihood under the show of hospitality. Even after ten years had elapsed fine ladies clamoured for admission to hear her sing, almost as much as they were to scramble for a glimpse of her husband at the great trial in Westminster Hall.[2] She would willingly have resumed her performances to eke out their slender store, but Sheridan's pride was obdurate. Hard by, lived a musical couple named Coote. Their two little children became attached to Mrs. Sheridan, who often sang for them; and it was here that Sir Joshua Reynolds first met and painted her as St. Cecilia with two listening cherubs, in a picture which is now at Bowood, while another original hangs in the dining-room at Frampton Court. A fresh romance attaches to this portrait. The young Sheridans could not afford its purchase, but the friendly artist,

[1] *Morning Post*, February 4, 1774; Eg. MS. 1975, f. 139.

[2] Cf. "Autobiography and Corr. of Mrs. Delany," Vol. IV., p. 585 (1784).

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Mrs. SHERIDAN as ST. CECILIA,
from the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds
(in the possession of Algernon Sheridan, Esquire).

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perhaps divining Sheridan's future, reserved it expressly for him. Sixteen years onwards he told him in a letter, still treasured by the Sheridans, that "a very rich frame" was being made for it. "You will easily believe," he continues, "that I have often been solicited to part with that picture and to put a price on it; but to these solicitations I have always turned my deafest ear, knowing that you would not give your consent, and without it I certainly should never part with it. I really value that picture at five hundred guineas. In the common course of business (exclusive of its being Mrs. Sheridan's picture) the price of a whole length with the children would be three hundred. If, therefore, for the consideration of your exclusive right to the picture I charge one hundred and fifty guineas, I hope you will think me a reasonable man. It is with great regret that I part with the best picture I ever painted."[1] Generous painter, and fortunate possessor! This, as has been seen, is the very picture that Sheridan, many years later, took up Wilberforce to see, and stood wistful as they viewed it. At that very time it was impounded by creditors, but Sheridan borrowed from William Linley to redeem it. He moved early among the connoisseurs, and in the same year as Reynolds practically gave him this *chef-d'œuvre*, figured among a brilliant crowd at the Boydell Gallery. Francis Wheatley made a water-colour of the throng, which now hangs in the South Kensington Museum. The Prince of Wales is there with the royal Dukes, and next to Sheridan stands Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire.

In 1774, probably at the Cootes's, she first made his acquaintance. She was then seventeen and had just married that marital iceberg, the fifth Duke. Even in girlhood she appeared the "phenomenon" that Horace Walpole styled her; as he was to write in the following February, "She effaces all without being a beauty." Her charm, he thought, sprang from "her youth, figure, flowing good nature, sense, lively modesty and modest familiarity."[2] But in her, art blended with nature. She was,

[1] Sheridan MSS.

[2] Horace Walpole to Lady Ossory, February 1, 1775.

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above all, an *esprit*, and joined the wish to please of an impulsive nature to the resolve to rule of an ambitious mind. Highly endowed, adept in foreign languages and foreign literature, both she and her sister Harriet, Lady Duncannon (afterwards known as Lady Bessborough), prattled prettily with the Muses. At this moment she stood on the threshold of her chameleon changes, nor was that yet observable in her which Elizabeth Sheridan noticed twelve years later, that when she entered a room there was too much of her, she seemed larger than "full length."[1] But even now, although natural in her promptings, she was self-conscious in her bearing. If she entered a minister's room she would startle his underlings by abrupt snatches of French, soliloquised for their edification. If she played Lady Bountiful (and she was generous) her schoolgirls must wear Leghorn hats and the schoolboys be garbed after her own design. She loved to surprise and defeat expectation, as later she loved to direct the mainsprings political and social. She was artificially romantic, and the fairy queen not of poesy but of transformation.

By 1788 Sheridan had completely captivated both her and her sister, and since she plays a large part in his career, a word of characterisation is needful. She descended in the fourth degree from Sarah Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough, whose face and ambition she inherited. Born in 1757, eight years junior to Fox, her play-fellow and hero, the first Earl of Spencer's daughter by his marriage with Miss Poyntz (that wise Countess to whom Sheridan dedicated his Monody on Garrick), a sister of the conventional Lord Spencer who married Lord Lucan's æsthetic daughter, she baffled her surroundings from her cradle. The writer has been privileged to see hundreds of her letters throughout her career, and from first to last her moods are as varied as the months which display them. Now she is scholar, now coquette; by turns rake and recluse; highly cultivated and quick-witted, yet hesitating in judgment; at once a gambler and an innocent. When she returns from Ranelagh, it is to moralise in verse while she unlaces a corsage so tight that it

[1] LeFanu MSS.

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GEORGIANA, Duchess of Devonshire
and her friend, Lady Betty Foster,
from the original crayon by Bartolozzi
(in the Author's possession).

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has made her swoon. Grave clergymen penned warning pamphlets of dull remonstrance against the dissipation of her gifts. Wherever she went she scattered verses, French, Italian, and English, in her wake, while her poem on crossing the St. Gothard was read throughout England. Wherever she moved men and women turned her slaves. Marie Antoinette, when the Duchess visited Paris, proved no exception. Philosophers, poets and statesmen succumbed to her spell. The Prince of Wales (whom she upbraided for falsehood, after abetting his marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert) was madly in love with her and jealous of young Grey, whom he fancied her favourite—so jealous that his final treatment of him in politics may be ascribed to this cause. Her passionate friendship with Lady Betty Foster, the daughter of Lady Hamilton's bishop of Derry, eclipsed the ravings even of their pet Rousseau. "All, all my possible hopes of friendship," she wrote to her from Venice, in the summer of 1786, "are concentered [*sic*] in you. Without you the World is nothing to me. If you could forsake me, I would not bear to live, or living should never think of any other creature."[1] Yet in her dual nature sense alternated with sensibility. She was an excellent mother, tending and training her children not only with discrimination, but with humour. "She was very full of God Almighty," wrote the Duchess late in life of her daughter, "as she was going to bed last night, and said He was a darling and gave her everything except Pyecrust!! I looked as grave as I could and explained He would love and give her everything that was good, if she was good."[2] When she believed herself to be dying in 1790, her last words to her little son, "Be brave, always speak the truth," bear witness to the inner core of her being. Her manuscript essays show originality of mind, and her penitent prayers (which were much needed) still survive on paper.[3] Herself a devoted daughter,

[1] Devonshire House MSS. "The Duchess of Devonshire to Lady E. Foster, VENICE, June 7, 1786."

[2] *Ibid.* Georgiana to her mother (1806).

[3] The writer owns an album containing several of these and of her profaner compositions.

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she wrote almost daily to her mother, who in truth was her mother-confessor. She vows to reform, to retrench, to retire. She weeps over every trouble that her escapades have occasioned. "Yes," she sings in one of these letters about herself and her sister,

"Yes, we have cost you many a tear,
Have rent your feeling soul,
And borne by Folly's mad career
Outstepped each wise control.

But carryed by a giddy flood,
Our course of Life is vain,
And yet we'd shed with joy our blood
To save you from a pain.

But you have checked the headlong force,
A second Life you gave;
Rejoice then in a happier course,
For you alone could save."

All this happened years after 1774, but even now she was chafed into caprice by a husband prim and precise in his capacity of grandee, yet lax enough as a man. When she once sat on his knee in the presence of her mother and sister, he repulsed her with the remark that such warm demonstrations should be reserved for privacy. No wonder that she grew restive and hungry after distraction, or that the glamour of such a patroness gained a dangerous hold on the Sheridans when at length she condescended to become their friend.

Her sister, with whom Sheridan grew even more intimate, was nearly as fascinating and far more ungovernable. She flirted with art, with politics, with literature, and with men. She dispatched her child (Byron's Lady Caroline Lamb) to Italy, and when she reclaimed her, it was only to place her under the charge of her mother, who brought her up, if anyone could ever bring up the sprite-like and capricious girl. Over Sheridan she long exerted a glamour and a sway.

Not only incomparables like these, but Lady Lucan, Lady Cork, the Coventrys and the Harringtons[1] extended their

[1] For the last two cf. Creevey, Vol. I., p. 56.

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Lady **BESSBOROUGH,**

after the engraving by **Bartolozzi.**

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friendship to the brilliant pair. Music, wit, and ability riveted the bond, and Sheridan, always susceptible to manner, gravitated, like his father, towards its inheritors. His butcher and milkman, however, were not to be propitiated by titles, and he worked with a will to support the needs of the small household in Orchard Street.

It has been noted how early his literary endeavours turned to politics as well as the drama. We shall see shortly how even now politics engrossed him, audaciously enough in one hitherto unknown instance, and we shall see, too, that his dramatic efforts were not confined to the three plays which renowned him in the succeeding year. But for the nonce essays and reviews engaged him. A long fragment of a critique on the "flying piece of a political writer about the present Ministry" [Lord North's] survives among his papers. Sheridan wields the tomahawk of the eighteenth century reviewer. This hack's thoughts are "all borrowed," his "derivations trite," his "style puerile." "The author hardly mentions the subject of which he treats," says Sheridan, who proceeds to criticise phraseology, "the *scope* of the Constitution," "the *marked* patience of the people," and so forth. Irony limits the criticism. "'Tis his policy," observes one who by the same token writes of "intelegyble," "to maul his sentences as much as possible to disguise them, though they suffer by it; on the same principle as a man will bye [*sic*] a tweed coat in Monmouth Street and strip it to make its decorations appear more their own." Some there may have been who, wincing under such similes, afterwards repaid Sheridan in kind. But he did better work than such trifles.[1] Besides contributing to the columns of the *Detector* and *Dramatic Censor*, he had in hand "a book" "which" he is "just now sending to the press and which" he thinks will do him "some credit if it leads to nothing else."[2] This book seems to have been his tract called "The Sanctuary," an essay on

[1] This review was published in Woodfall's *Advertiser*, and it is rightly so stated by a writer who can never have seen it in manuscript. Cf. "Sheridaniana" (1826), p. 55.

[2] Sheridan to Linley, November 17, 1774. Cf. Moore, Vol. I., p. 122.

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the education of women, inscribed to Queen Charlotte, as his father's on the education of men had been dedicated to King George.[1] It remains in a rough state. No trace exists of its publication, and it may well have been that when the Queen was approached she discountenanced a work French in origin and revolutionary in ideas. His expression of them is most unequal, the style more florid and slipshod than that of other early essays, and the scheme, one which at the time seemed strange and chimerical. "Nature" and sentimentality are its refrains. He imagines an establishment formed on the model of Madame de Maintenon's at St. Cyr, and he presumes the Queen will surrender Hampton Court, "or some other palace," for the purpose. She is to be made "chancellor" of this woman's university, and the first ladies of the land are to be its "sub-chancellors." Sheridan stickles for equality: 'The classes are to be distinguished by age—none by degree. For as their qualification should be gentility, they are all on a level. The instructors should be women, except for the languages. Latin and Greek should not be learned. The frown of pedantry [observes grave three-and-twenty] destroys the blush of humility. The practical part of the sciences, as of astronomy, etc., should be taught. In history they would find that there are other passions in man than love." And then comes the diatribe, instanced in our opening, against the realistic novel. Women are to be schooled by more chivalrous characters than the cold, courtly worldlings who "are so clipped and rubbed and polished that God's image and inscription is worn from them, and when He calls in his coin He will no longer know them for his own."[2] As for recreations, ". . . They should ride and walk; the younger part, be invited to exercise by the little pastimes." Prizes are to raise "a spirit of emulation" in dances and concerts, and "the French *petits*

[1] Both Moore and Rae supposed that he meant his comments on Chesterfield's Letters. But the notes for these, though long, are disjointed fragments, whereas the surviving pieces of the other tract, consecutive and coherent, might be called "a book."

[2] Cited by Moore, Vol. I., pp. 132, 133.

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jeux" are to enliven the winter. "As to the moral duties and tone of the heart, that must ever depend on the people that conduct it. There should be a clergyman of uncommon character for their curate. . . . They should be taken into life by degrees. Above all, a knowledge of economy and the management of a house should be inculcated as by the Nuns in France. . . . The want of this [wise young Sheridan !] has hurt matrimony more than can be expressed." Would our modern suffragettes relish a sentence already quoted—"I hate women link-boy-like"?[1] They might be better pleased with the succeeding passage—"The dispute about the proper sphere of women is idle. That men should have attempted to draw a line for their orbit shows that God meant them for comets and above our jurisdiction. With them the enthusiasm of poetry and the idolatry of love is the simple voice of nature. . . . The influence that women have over us is as the medium through which the finer arts act upon us. The incense of our love and respect for them creates the atmosphere of our souls which corrects and meliorates the beams of knowledge. . . . In savage countries where the pride of man has not fixed the first dictates of ignorance into law we see the real effects of nature. The wild Huron shall, to the object of his love, become gentle as his weary reindeer. . . . He shall rob the birds for feathers for her hair, and dive for pearls for her neck; her look shall be his law, and her beauties his worship. It is the destiny of man to be ruled by women." He speaks of philosophers and the "state of Nature," and then follows a far better passage which has never been quoted, but which signally illustrates his attitude:

"God made man of the dust of the earth. He moulded this clod into this form alive, for He fashioned it thus wonderfully and fearfully and breathed animal life into it and the divine flame of the soul. When this was finished God saw His work imperfect, and He took from this man a part. He took not from the base earth but from the composition He had made, and inspired it with His own hands, and from this part He moulded—and well might—a form more beautiful, more graceful

[1] Sheridan MSS. Cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 273. And cf. *ante*, p. 106.

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and divine, and to this superior being did He not breathe a Soul? And the soul He breathed into it is more beautiful, more graceful, more divine. He gave an influence to it over the first being, and the first time he [the man] saw it, he took it for a Divinity and would have worshipped it. And then God Himself said, Thou art the superior, yet he obeyed even to vice the woman, and the Almighty found that He had made man too weak, and charmed with His own work in Woman, He had made her too powerful. Thus suffered He the first seed of vice. Envy took root, & He let the man, who excelled alone in brutal strength, convince the genious [*sic*] of Woman. Yet still we find the sacred influence prevail, and in proportion as we, by civilisation and knowledge polish manners, in [that] proportion Woman gains her natural ascendant. We obey, tho' we know not why we love even guilt in them, and that love almost excuses guilt in us. Pity was the life of our original creation. . . . What I have said accedes to the subject in this manner. If it be granted that the Genious [*sic*] of Woman be thus great and uncircumscribed . . . , it will follow [spelt "folly"] that next to the worship of our Creator, we should give our attention to their happiness and improvement. Since chance and animal strength has placed the Power in our hands, how can it be better employed than in perfecting that which must govern us?" "Nature," he proceeds, "will write on the Heart of Man with Woman as with a Pentegraph [*i.e.*, pantograph—a copying instrument]. What she delineates on the original, that will appear on the Copy,[1] and let it be their mutual tact to perfect the lines, supply the figures and dispose the shades. . . . Let me not be mistaken as insinuating that in women is the essence of Vice. In women is the influencing power of Virtue. If Vice be Virtue misapplied, from her too comes the influence of Vice. Adam stood not a day when Eve fell. Adam might have ate, and Eve not. It was the instigation of beauty and flattery that seduced. The serpent was then an object of the completest beauty, and its voice was harmony. Eve would not have

[1] This sentence is wrongly given and in its wrong place, by Moore, Vol. I., p. 131.

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listened to the same sentiments from the mouth of the disgraceful Toad. Hence the Devil changed his shape. This is the natural operation of Art and Beauty. These are the natural operations of Woman and their operation will be eternal." His romantic sentimentality pervades the whole of these diffuse ramblings. "As for us," he says in a paragraph cited by Moore, "we are born in a state of warfare with poverty and distress. The sea of adversity is no natural element, and he that will not buffet with the billows deserves to sink. But you, oh you, by nature formed of gentler kind," he continues in a rhythm recalling that of his "Ode to Scandal," "can *you* endure the biting storm, shall you be turned to the nipping blast, and not a door be open to give you shelter?"[1] Charity must prevail, and had such a charity existed, "the mild *Parthenia* and my poor Laura," he sighs, "would not have fallen into untimely graves." Women and men must "herd together," "each will serve as the mirror of the other," and, "with Narcissian fondness, admire themselves in each other's being." It has been already noticed how closely Sheridan studied Farquhar, nor was it by chance that he followed in his footsteps here, for Farquhar was the first champion of women's rights. "In England," he exclaims, "where women are its glory, must women be abused? Where women rule, must women be enslaved, nay, cheated into slavery, mocked by a promise of comfortable society into a wilderness of solitude? I dare not keep the thought about me."[2]

But Sheridan girded himself to sterner stuff. His comments on Lord Chesterfield's cynical Letters, just issued, are acute and thoughtful, and the reader of "The Rivals" will remember that Lydia, when she tells her maid to open the sermon-book at "Sobriety," also exclaims, "Fling me Lord Chesterfield's Letters." They revolted Sheridan, several of whose notes have been cited already: two more quotations will suffice. One, which is new, relates to the "selfish vanity of the father," and it displays Sheridan's unconventional attitude:—"The natural duty of a

[1] Cited by Moore, Vol. I., p. 131.
[2] "The Beaux Stratagem," Act V., Sc. II.

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father is greater even than that from a child. The obligation of birth, nothing, or it would be just to resent natural deformity." The other has been given by Moore: "Emulation is a dangerous passion to encourage, in some points, in young men; it is so linked with envy. If you breed your son with reproach for not surpassing his school-fellows, he will hate those who are before him. If he surpass them, his vanity will not admit of a comparison. Emulation, to be encouraged not even in virtue. True virtue will, like the Athenian, rejoice in being surpassed. A friendly emulation cannot exist in two minds; one must hate the perfections which eclipse him. Love cannot call it perfect virtue which thrives in another's loss. Thus, from hating the quality in his competitor, he loses the respect for it in himself. 'Tis an Animal Passion. Improve my son to be praised without comparison, to give your father Pleasure. A young man by himself, better educated than two. . . . Epaminondas, who reflected on the pleasure his success would give his father, most glorious; an emulation for that purpose, true."[1]

There is also another unpublished essay which, had it been printed, would have marred his election, two years later, to "Literary Club." This is a projected answer by Sheridan to Dr. Johnson's "Taxation no Tyranny," a defence of the royal prerogative against the American colonists, which appeared in 1775, with suppressed passages that would have kindled the wrath of Lord Chatham, for one of them even insinuated that the great ex-Minister aspired to become President.[2] Sheridan's retort is of the more importance as bearing on his unknown though published verses on "The General Fast," which will soon be noticed. He would have none of the American War, that for the moment had opened with Britain's illusive victory

[1] The first part of this is given imperfectly and inaccurately by Moore, but rightly by Rae, Vol. I., p. 275. Both Moore and Rae give a variant belonging to this part (about the Athenian's wish for his country to excel), as applying to the *Romans*.

[2] "Taxation no Tyranny, an Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress, 1775." An edition of 1776 is in the "Political Tracts," published by Strahan & Cadell in the Strand.

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at Lexington. He descried ruin for England, for liberty and for justice.

Neither Moore nor Rae has quoted its most material passages —those which underlie his political outlook. Moore quotes more or less accurately, the sentence which stigmatises as "the most slavish doctrine that ever was inculcated,"[1] Johnson's maxim that to be born a subject means tacit consent to the established government. By this showing, objects Sheridan, "there never would have been one alteration of the first modes of government—no revolution in England." Moore again cites Sheridan's shot at the Doctor as an "eleemosynary politician" who must yield "the miserable quit-rent of an annual pamphlet,"[2] and his wrath at the Johnsonian sneer of "the fanciful Montesquieu."[3] Both Moore and Rae, too, give the sentence that "men seldom think deeply on subjects on which they have no choice of opinion. They are fearful of encountering obstacles to their faith (as in religion), and so are content with the surface"; and Moore also gives part of Sheridan's answer to Johnson's argument that majorities are unrepresented even in England. Sheridan urged that ". . . every man can influence votes," and that "even a cook" (and this Moore omits) "through the dressing of meat is the simplest proof of existence." Sheridan's comparison of Ajax and Agamemnon, elected chieftains by lot, with our own system of candidature has also been printed. But the following will be new, and it is extremely characteristic :—

"I admit his Position that a Charter is given for the advantage of the Mother country. Then why expect such gratitude for what we do from self-interest? If a number of Ramblers were to settle without consent, we should not engage in a war

[1] Moore prints "worst."

[2] Moore has "the easy quit-rent of refined panegyric" from another portion which seems missing.

[3] Dr. Johnson's allusion runs as follows: "The Congress has extracted a position from the fanciful Montesquieu that, *in a free State, every man, being a free agent, ought to be concerned in his own Government.* Whatever is true of taxation is true of every other law, that he who is bound by it without his consent is not free, for he is not concerned in his own government."

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to support them. . . Is there no difference in bringing a man by force to his trial and convincing him unheard?" Nor has more than one sentence been cited from his striking reply to the Tory's insistence on "right of conquest," with its bearing on Ireland.

"Right of Conquest necessarily ceases when the greater ceases to be the stronger, for it then can give no Protection to the weaker and consequently has no right to rule it. The old member talks of the countries as being both ours by right of conquest. This (however it may do with Ireland, which, keeping pace with England, is never likely to be a match for her) is the worst Doctrine that can be for America. If America is ours by conquest, it is the conquerors who settle there [that] are to claim these powers." And he thus proceeds with his clear-sighted contention, "When the colonies come to a certain size, it will be certainly best to give them a Parliament or a representation . . . if we mean to help them. When a colony is of age [there is] a Parallel between Father & Son. . . . They [the Americans] fled not from Parliament, but from a King. Cromwell would have gone to America." In still another fragment, which recalls his conversation at Dr. Johnson's "Club," he points the fact that the emigrant's search after freedom implies its absence at home. "Nevertheless America," he urges, "is under immense obligations to the English Parliament. If an arbitrary Stewart were on the throne, what a situation would theirs be!" He instances Lord Chatham and the cyder tax, and he was to re-instance them in a long speech on the Tobacco Duties, fifteen years afterwards.[1]

These technical arguments found a more popular expression in his "Lyric Ode" on "The General Fast," published in 1775 as "by the author of 'The Duenna,'" and satirising the solemn fast day that had just been proclaimed. Old Sheridan had opened his "humble dedication" to the King with "Sire." His son followed suit in his warning to the same monarch. "Sire," he begins, "to dedicate to the Throne without

[1] Cf. "Speeches," Vol. I., p. 544. Sheridan's argument at the Literary Club is given *ante*, p. 86.

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permission first obtained, may be called insolence and audacity by the weak and uninformed, but those who are acquainted with the routine of business at St. James' will know that to ask a reasonable request is, in effect, to solicit a refusal. A plain man, and a loyal subject, wanting because he is plain and loyal, the necessary recommendations, must announce himself, and tell his Sovereign a truth which his courtiers, his *friends*, as they are falsely called, have either too much ignorance to discover, or too little honesty to reveal. This truth, Sire, which every schoolboy in political knowledge could confirm, is, simply, that the American War, founded in injustice, and carried on by folly, must end in irretrievable disgrace, or in absolute destruction. The idea, Sire, of conquering a people, in arms and arts confessedly our equals, in every virtue undoubtedly our superiors, savours too much of folly, or something worse than folly, to have been promulgated by any genius less than those very contemptible which at present surround and disgrace the throne." Strong words, these, yet not stronger than the retrospect now warrants. In this very year Franklin offered one, whom Walpole styled "by the want of grace late King of France and America,"[1] £350,000 a year if he would repeal the offensive bills. Within two years, the filibustering Burgoyne, who twice censured his officers at an age which should have meant forbearance, capitulated at Saratoga, and France acknowledged America's declaration of independence. Within eight years, that independence was sanctioned by a bad peace, shocking barbarities had been committed on both sides, and the way paved for the French Revolution. "The sun of Britain has set for ever," cried Shelburne, soon to be Lansdowne, at the close of the American War. At its outset, "twenty such victories as have lately been obtained in America must end in total overthrow and ruin"—thus concludes Sheridan's preface. This ode was written before his association with Fox and Burke; it was his own unguided opinion. Nor does he fail to salve his half-treason

[1] Cf. H. Walpole's letters to the Countess of Ossory under the dates January 15 and 24, 1775.

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by a protest of loyalty before he embarks on the risky venture of a speech in rhyme. Some of these ringing verses must be given here, though the whole will be found at the end of this volume[1]:—

"Genius of Britain, guide my song,
Fair Freedom, lure the verse along
Which spreads thy genuine praise:
No common theme the soul inspires,
I strike no inharmonious lyres,
For Freedom fills my lays.
* * * *
There was a time, to Britain dear
(Its memory let our sons revere),
When Western climes were ours,
When Albion thunders through the world
In the red lightning's rage were hurled
And awed the tyrant powers,

When slavish France, and abject Spain,
And all who drag the iron chain
Which haughty Despots frame,
Would dread and hate the Brunswick line,
And own Britannia's power divine
Who leads her sons to Fame.

With Pitt inspired, Wolfe drew the sword
And every paltry tyrant lord
O'er subjects trod to dust
Owned that the SOUL ALONE was free
And owned HER right to liberty
Who solemniz'd her trust.

But now alas! so chang'd the time
(Detested thought that mars my rhyme!)
Debauch'ry holds the helm;
Rank impotence and dire disease
Waft Britain's flota o'er the seas
And curse the sinking realm.
* * * *
But sing, my muse, in worthier strains
Th' heroic souls who glad the plains
Where Freedom loves to dwell:
Putnam, and Washington, and Lee,
Arnold, and brave Montgomery,
The faithful page shall swell.

[1] Cf. App. B. to this volume. The Montgomery mentioned in the Ode was the British officer who fought for the rebels, and perished in the attack on Quebec.

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Montgomery! dear to future days,
What savage Hand the hero slays,
  And drives him down to death,
May some less inauspicious arm
With forceful fire[1] the slave disarm
  Nor stop HIS fleeting breath.

* * *

But let me tell, ere yet I close
The list of Britain's genuine foes,
  How THEY the fast will keep;
How uproar, riot, murder, noise
Shall glad the heart, and raise the voice,
  While *Albion* sits to weep.

* * * *

Courtiers, forgive the rhyming past,
I'll tell you how *I* mean to fast,
  And sanctify the day:
So God protect me, as I mean
With heart all pure and conscience clean
  To *feast*—and not to pray.

Or if I pray, my vows shall be
That every child of Liberty
  May hail its parent's name,
And every foe, and every slave,
And every all-submissive knave,
  May glory in his shame.

The festive board already set,
My friends in crowds already met,
  I view in Fancy's eye.[2]
The wine shall swell the rising soul,
We'll drink and sing without controuel;—
  What King so great as I?

Our Toast, 'Old Freedom thro' the world!
May every slave to earth be hurled,
  And every tyrant fall!
However sanctify'd the name,
Kings have o'er us no claim to fame
  But from the KING of ALL.

Daily, devoutly, while we live,
Due praises to our God we'll give
  And all His beauties own!
And with some GEORGE the sceptre sway,
And lead, through Freedom's sacred way
  To her imperial Throne.'"

[1] Misprinted "sire."

[2] Poor Mrs. Sheridan!

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This was his last political effusion till 1778, when with Fox and Fitzpatrick he founded and wrote for the *Englishman*. In December, 1775, "Novus" was again apostrophising the *Public Advertiser*, but Sheridan does not seem to have re-entered the lists, though "Novus's" provocative letter of December 15, 1775, deals with Mr. Secretary Johnson's intercepted letter, and remarks that the English Opposition are "friends of the Americans."

Already in mid-November, 1775, Sheridan was at work over "The Rivals," which, so he assured Linley, had been hurriedly written by request of Mr. Harris, the Covent Garden manager, and in a few days would be actually in rehearsal; six hundred pounds, he added, was the least to be expected from this new and exciting venture. The play will soon claim consideration, but another of the same period, demands a few words before we discuss the first of his successes. For want of a better name, this known fragment has been styled "A Drama of Devils"—"A Wild Drama" its manuscript entitles it. The piece, on the whole, is as crude and ineffective a whimsy as a clever youth could concoct, and it wears the appearance of having been worked up from a discarded and boyish effort. It is noteworthy, however, for some extraneous reasons. It introduces the song, "Dry be that tear," and a distinct allusion to Mrs. Sheridan's own verses on "The Sweets of Solitude," which have been mentioned.[1]

[1] Cf. *ante*, pp. 194, 275. It comes in "Reginilla's" song:—

"Wilt thou then leave me? Canst thou go from me
To woo the fair that love the gaudy day?"

and the lines are:—

"If thou art studious, I will read
Thee tales of pleasing woe,
If thou art sad, I'll kiss away
The tears . . . that flow.
If thou would'st play, I'll kiss thee till I blush,
Then hide that blush upon my breast,
If thou would'st sleep, . . .
Shall rock thy aching head to rest."

No one can compare these with Mrs. Sheridan's "The sweets of solitude to share" without being struck by the likeness.

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It is the germ of "The Foresters," a romantic operetta which Sheridan began a few years later, and which he was always promising to the world. It betrays a German influence at a time when French influence dominated the English stage, and long before "Pizarro" transferred that element in Kotzebue that Dickens was to parody in the flights of Crummles, and that still lingers in modern melodrama.

Its persons are fantastically named; "Reginilla," "Peridor," and "Mopsa," "Lubin" and "Colin," "Urial" and "Helial," "Meli" and "Savoda," "Pamphiles," "Sarodin" and "Ludovico." Equally fantastic is its plot. Every one is in mufti and at loggerheads, and we catch confused echoes of the "Tempest." Outlaws disguised as demons terrorise a village adjoining the forest where they hide. In this wood a hermit, leagued secretly with the freebooters, keeps the fair Reginilla secluded alike from sunshine and mankind. A gallant prince, however, masked as a huntsman, gains access, falls in love, and, by the jugglery of the hermit, takes the form in her imagination of a phantom. Suddenly the reigning Duke arrives with troops to suppress the "lawless renegades who in infernal masquerade make a hell around him." Haunted by remorse for having won his throne by its lawful heir's shipwreck, he unbosoms himself to the tiresome recluse, who learns that the Duke is bent also on the recovery of his long-lost son, whom he fancies a victim of the Satanic band. The son, however, has only run away from home, and amuses himself by courting Mopsa, a village belle, in the strange guise of a dancing bear. Had the drama been finished, our young huntsman would probably have proved the rightful heir, the hermit, a banished counsellor, and Reginilla his kidnapped daughter. There is a mock trial-scene before demon-judges ("Hell by the smell, certainly," says the culprit) in which Sheridan has interspersed some wit. A courtier, brought up for sentence, describes himself as "a foolish utensil of State—a clock kept in a waiting-chamber to count the hours." An officer, charged with the crime of success, answers with "If I was preferred, it was not my fault—upon my word I never did anything to incur preferment." But the general sloppiness of sentiment

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may be judged by a rhapsody on the lips of the huntsman who (as usual) suggests elopement to the heroine:—

" . . . I would carry thee where all above an azure canopy extends, at night bedropped with gems and one more glorious lamp that yields such bashful light as love enjoys—while underneath a carpet shall be spread of flowers to court the pressure of thy step, with such sweet whispered invitations from the leaves of shady groves or murmuring of silver streams, that thou shalt think thou art in Paradise." [1]

This would disgrace even Blanche Amory's album, while the dishevelment of metre may be instanced by the following snatches of blank verse:

"These are the fiends that do oppress the people,
But every wrong they do to court
A deluded monarch's smiles shall rise
In perilous witness [?] at that
Great Bar, where a people's wrongs
Shall be deemed the blackest enemies against the Majesty of Virtue."

Despite redeeming portions, the whole play is bathos without pathos, nor need we regret the loss of a second fragment on some bacchanalian subject, if indeed it be Sheridan's at all.[2] That is what so often perplexes us in many of Sheridan's initial performances. Balderdash, unworthy of a school-girl, alternates with real treasure, and the contrast is that of a gold mine where the poorest vein intersects the richest. And yet, as so often happens, it was in this very domain that Sheridan fancied that he excelled. In his preface to "The Rivals," one of his best pieces of prose, he avows that the comedy was " in a walk which I had not frequented " and therefore less subject to " starts of recollection." The world may congratulate itself on the

[1] Cited by Moore, Vol. I., p. 310.

[2] Cf. Add. MS. 26036, which is a quarto volume of MS. plays, etc., containing what is identifiable as old Sheridan's prologue to the play acted for Swift's monument. The sole reason for supposing the scenario for one scene of the bacchanalian drama to be Sheridan's is that it precedes portions of Delille's French version of " The School for Scandal." In a list of his plays (*ibid.* 29764, f. 72), probably prepared by Wilkie after Sheridan's death, also occurs an unknown " Dramatic Proverb," but neither of these figures in a catalogue apparently in Sheridan's hand (*ibid.* 26008, f. 69).

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exchange. For the fact is that here Sheridan went beyond his range. Despite his romantic leanings, he could body forth little from airy nothings: he needed a personal experience for his muse. Weird fancies transcend the suburban mind as much as primeval passions, and he could no more have bodied forth "Christabel" than he could have flown. For want of wings he betook himself to high-faluting. On the other hand, the play is here in *déshabille;* it emerges better in his more polished "Foresters." Nor should it be forgotten that the eighteenth century, an age of wit, had a poor ear for finer music, as some of the worst *bouts-rimés* by Fox and Sheridan attest. In this disordered drama none would recognise the author of "The Rivals," still less of "The School for Scandal." In a kindred venture, however, of much later date, he proved more successful, because its scene was laid in an historic fairy-land, where "Puck" and "Pierrot" could roam at will. His "King Arthur, a Fairy Opera," the manuscript of which Mr. Patmore found with others at a pawnbroker's, and presented to the British Museum,[1] was probably prompted by Dryden's extravaganza, and has nothing to do with Garrick's vamped-up drama of that name. There is no reason to doubt Sheridan's authorship; many of the corrections and most of the songs are in his handwriting, while he has re-written part of the text. The hero, Edwin, is gentle, brave, and good, but a humpback, and in this real misfortune Sheridan's ironic pathos could find play and personal scope, for there is a duel by a haunted tower, and Edwin, who loves Editha, King Arthur's niece, is tortured by a lover's doubt and melancholy. The action passes at Caerleon, in King Arthur's court, during his war with the Saxons. Humour abounds in its material. There is Sir Topaz, "handsome, vain

[1] The MS. is in Eg. MS. 25,937, and Mr. Patmore treated of it and its fellow-fragments in his "My Friends and Acquaintance" (1854). Mr. Fitzgerald, who mentions it, doubts its authenticity on account of its subject, but he was unaware of Sheridan's romantic tendencies (which have been exemplified already from his earliest days), or of his fondness for Dryden and Spenser. In the manuscript, parts are also cast for Dowton, Bannister, Snett, and Miss De Camp.

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and lying," with a servant Gregory, "lying, bragging, cowardly, curious, and gormandising." There is Sir Reginald, a "pompous and mysterious old knight." There is "an old blustering, blundering steward," and an "Esquire," who says, "I see the sun beginning to rise behind the summit of your worship's back." All these are actual characters, known to Sheridan in their habit as they lived. For lyrical romance he chose the minstrel Damian, and for whimsey a Shakespearian chorus, "Queen Mab," "Oberon," "Pease-blossom," "May-flower," "Will-o'-the-Wisp," "Robin Goodfellow," and "a troop of fairies." In this *milieu* his fancy strayed at ease, though it could not rise above it.

Some of the songs are characteristic. One, sung by the heroine's maid, Bertha, qualifies Edwin's ideal endowments by recurring to the drawback of his "hump behind." Another is a fragmentary invocation to the fairies:—

> "Come, every elf, and every fay,
> And every wandering sprite."

But the most modern is the servant's picture of a battle which he has every claim to exaggerate save that of experience:—

> "Never yet, without a doubt,
> Was such a story told,
> How we put the crew to rout—
> Paynims stout and bold.
> Falchions glittering in the air,
> Swords and spears, and lances bright.
> 'Twas indeed a glorious sight
> (*Though I was not there*)."

It is a pity that the play was never perfected, though it is just possible that "King Arthur" was acted at Drury Lane, for Mrs. Tickell, writing to her sister, in November, 1783, mentions having seen it. "'King Arthur,'" she says, "is a very charming performance altogether, but too long, and I think might be improved in two or three things." Had this been Garrick's piecework she would hardly have noticed its excessive length, and in the manuscript Editha's part is cast for Miss Farren, who appears to have impersonated the heroine in this performance.

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Since, however, Sheridan entitles his piece an opera, it is perhaps more probable that it was written about 1789 for performance at the Haymarket. Its chief interest lies in its witness to Sheridan's predilection for romantic themes. Nor is this the sole occasion on which he treated of elf-land, for he is said to have left "an unfinished sketch" which re-modelled Suckling's "Goblins," and adapted that comedy to the modern stage.[1] Ere long the remains of a comedy hitherto unknown will serve to show the success of his rough jottings for dialogue within his province. For the present, however, it is a relief to turn to that masterpiece of humour which signalised the first month of the next year—the most spontaneous creation of all those which hand him down to posterity.

[1] Cf. the *Gentleman's Magazine*, February, 1840, p. 127.

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CHAPTER IX

"THREE GENTLEMEN AT ONCE"

["THE RIVALS," "ST. PATRICK'S DAY" AND "THE DUENNA," WITH THEIR SEQUELS]

(January to November, 1775)

"Indeed, the French comedy is now become so very elevated and sentimental that it has not only banished humour and Molière from the stage, but it has banished all spectators too."—GOLDSMITH, *Preface to "The Good-Natured Man."*

THE night of Tuesday, January 17, 1775, saw the first performance of Sheridan's "Rivals," at Covent Garden Theatre. It was announced anonymously and succeeded by "a new pastoral masque and a pantomime (interspersed) called "The Druids."[1] After two performances it was withdrawn, in ten days repaired, and then acted with pronounced and prolonged success. The play itself must be first considered. Its composition and progress will engage us later; and when we come to deal with the tiresome disputes about plagiarism, it may amuse us to find how the few real plagiarisms have been missed, while a quantity of forced or fancied analogies have been put into superficial requisition. Let us repeat at the outset that, though Congreve's plays were acted at Bath in Sheridan's youth, and "The Double-Dealer" was one of his father's *répertoire*, Farquhar is the sole dramatist of the Restoration that he appears to have studied.

The motto which heads this chapter strikes the true note of the moment. The stage groaned, or rather whined, under the simpering tyranny of Diderot's *comédie larmoyante*. Neuter plays,

[1] Cf. Playbill for January 18. For the day of the week, cf. the *Morning Chronicle*, January 20, and the *Scorpion* for January 19, 1775.

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which were neither comedies nor tragedies, but the one tricked out in the gauds of the other, usurped the throne. Sentiment, by which was meant not the play of feeling but etiquette-book rules of passion, sentiments by which were meant not the natural flow of the heart, but didactic precepts of moral grammar, had begun to pall on the public taste. The moral pedagogues defeated their own end by taking all its colour from virtue. The eternal Cumberland—detested alike by Mrs. Thrale and Horace Walpole—that Cumberland who for thirty years deluged the stage with a flood of dulness, was the master of this school.[1] Seventeen years onwards, when Samuel Rogers published "The Pleasures of Memory," "Cumberland," he says, "called to thank me and tell me of its faults—faults which he himself had committed and which he hoped I would hear from an old writer. . . . He afterwards sent me 'Calvary.'"[2] Blundering, unforgiving, unforgetting, pedantic Cumberland! Foote, it is true, Arthur Murphy and George Colman had already furnished some amusing comedies, but most of their characters were mere vehicles for quip or sentiment, though the latter's "Clandestine Marriage," in which Garrick assisted, deservedly held its own. Still earlier, human nature had well-nigh fled the stage, and the majority of so-called comedies corresponded to what was said of Whitehead's "School

[1] ". . . Can I be diverted with Mr. Cumberland's comedies or Garrick's nonsensical epilogues? No, truly. I am almost as sick of our literature as of our politics and politicians, Bufos and Bufoses." H. W. to Lady Ossory, January 12, 1775. In a very clever pasquinade ("The Rutland Volunteers Influeza'd" [1783]), Cumberland is satirised in a distich including Miles Peter Andrews also:—

"Let Cumberland produce a play,
And Keate to Andrews yield the day."

Mrs. Thrale too, in her MS. Diary recently sold at auction, has stinging remarks on Cumberland's boredom and literary jaundice. Cumberland always made a point of composing his plays in a bare room and facing a flat wall. His conversation must have been better than his compositions, for Dr. Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale, "The want of company is an inconvenience, but Cumberland is a million." Cf. Letters to Mrs. Piozzi, Vol. II., p. 68 (October 21, 1799).

[2] "Early Life of S. Rogers," p. 243.

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for Lovers," a dull play on society to show that society was dull. It is true that Mrs. Sheridan's two plays of "The Discovery" (on the absurdity of youth indulging in unhappiness) and "The Dupe" (on the designs of an adventuress), though lecturing in tone, had been more literary in execution. The clever Hugh Kelly, too, in his "False Delicacy," which has sometimes been put forward as a "comedy of sentiment," was really (and in this very comedy) one of the first to break down the barriers. But the chief rebel had been Goldsmith, who, in two of his untrammelled comedies, had striven to recall audiences to nature. His success, however, with a public steeped in pomposities had been small. The critical Walpole failed to be pleased with his easy humour. He sneered at the vulgarity of "She Stoops to Conquer," a masterpiece that will long outlive his cynicism. "Stoops! indeed, so she does," he cavilled; "she is draggled up to the knees and has trudged all the way from Southwark fair."[1] The novelty of taking the joys, humours and sorrows of daily life as a medium either comic or tragic was pointed out by Beaumarchais in his "preface" to "The Barber of Seville,"—a modern "comedy"—gleams of tears and laughter under the rainbow of ironic wit. Hitherto, observes Beaumarchais, ridiculed citizens or afflicted kings had formed the staple, while stage deportment and stage sermons were stereotyped conventions. Character without stilts and humour with sympathy had grown out of date. Sheridan summarised the situation in the new prologue which he substituted on the tenth night of "The Rivals."[2] Pointing to the mask of Thalia on the proscenium, he demanded:

> "Look on her well—does she seem formed to teach?
> Should you expect to hear this lady preach?
> Is grey experience suited to her youth?
> Do solemn sentiments become that mouth?
> * * * * *
> Must we displace her? and instead advance
> The goddess of the woeful countenance—

[1] To Lady Ossory, March 16, 1773.
[2] It is lacking, however, in the first edition of the play.

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> The sentimental muse! Her emblems view,
> The 'Pilgrim's Progress' and a sprig of rue!
> View her—too chaste to look like flesh and blood—
> Primely pourtrayed on emblematic wood!
> There, fixed in usurpation should she stand,
> She'll snatch the dagger from her sister's hand."

Or, as he afterwards put it in his "Critic's" prose, the old fashion inclined "to dramatise the penal laws and make the stage a court of ease to the Old Bailey," to parade "the true sentimental with nothing ridiculous in it from beginning to end." "The theatre"—continues this conducer to its reformation,—"the theatre in proper hands, might certainly be made the school of morality; but now, I am sorry to say it, people seem to go there principally for their entertainment."

Lamb's objection to "The School for Scandal" that it misjoins "artificial" comedy to the sentimental, lies, as will be shown hereafter, somewhat on the surface, but in no sense does this criticism fit "The Rivals," where a sentimental pair (really sentimental as foils to the maudlin Lydia) obtrude themselves on comedy pure and simple. Goldsmith, much terser than Sheridan, wrote comedy *par excellence* with no such trespassers —laughter without tears. This, however, is scarcely life, where the two elements are seldom far asunder. Their union is "modern," and this modern comedy Sheridan in a sense forestalled, but in a sense only, for Falkland and Julia, though serious lovers in the plot, were introduced as a part-satire on their own sentiment, and thus half belong to the province of pure comedy. Sheridan wished to ridicule as well as to render the moods and caprices of self-concentrated love, and though Julia and Falkland deluged the pocket-handkerchiefs of their audience, those who wept with them on the stage laughed at them at home. Since Sheridan's day they have grown tedious, and are now almost eliminated from the scene. But played, as they should be played, with ironical earnestness, they might still with curtailment prove interesting studies.[1]

[1] In the Bancroft revival of 1884 "Falkland" and "Julia" received special attention.

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The main features of "The Rivals" are those of "She Stoops to Conquer," breeziness and human nature. The play has life—a racy life of boisterous spirits. The brisk and bustling contrasts of character stand in sharp relief, while the quick humour of telling situation fences, thrust on thrust, with the wit. It transports us to Comedy-land where all goes as it pleases and all comes right in the end. Far less polished and premeditated than "The School for Scandal," it is also much more sympathetic.[1] "The School for Scandal" breathes the diplomacy of a drawing-room, "The Rivals" is like a game of blind-man's-buff in the open air. And however unnatural this or that phrase may sound in the mouths which repeat it (though on the stage motive alone can be called "unnatural"), it is not unreal; the persons move and breathe and have their being. The testy old father is a type ancient as those of Plautus and Terence, but Sir Anthony Absolute, whose tyranny keeps pace with his gout and whose obstinacy contradicts itself, is a distinct species, alive with the lineaments of Sheridan's father. The young scapegrace, again, is no new character, but his impudent air of modesty and his lover's devotion, make him a sort of innocent Charles Surface. If the servants ape their masters and speak of Jupiter, Sheridan could supply his own excuse: "Heaven forbid they should not in a free country," he says in "The Critic." "Sir, I am not for making slavish distinctions and giving all the fine language to the upper sort of people"; and long before Sheridan, Congreve had noticed that the servants' hall affected smartness and the language above stairs.[2] Bob

[1] Its "hasty composition" (acknowledged by Sheridan in his letter to Linley of November 17, 1774) is reflected on by the *Morning Post* for January 18, 1775.

[2] In "The Old Bachelor" Lucy says of the valet Setter, "He is too true a *valet-de-chambre* not to affect his master's faults." Cf. Act III., Sc. VI. Jeremy, in "Love for Love," says he "no more" expects "to live the life of a play than to be canonised for a Muse after my decease," to which his master, Valentine, retorts, "You are witty, you rogue." Cf. Act I., Sc. I. In "The Way of the World," Betty, the chocolate-house waitress, answers the question of what is the time by "Turned of the last canonical hour, Sir," to which Mirabell answers, "How pertinently the jade answers me."

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Acres, however, is wholly original, though his fancy in oaths may derive from Congreve, whose Wittol in "The Old Bachelor" exclaims "Gads, daggers, belts, blades, and scabbards!"—a rather suspicious coincidence which the plagiary-hunters have missed. We know and see him; there can be no better test than that. So, too, with Sir Lucius, whose "Can a man commit a more heinous offence against another than to fall in love with the same woman?" sums up all his gay bravado. Even Lydia, the gushing school-girl, is individualised by her passion for elopement.

Falkland and Julia, as we know from the love-letters and love-incidents preceding Sheridan's marriage, are true transcripts from himself and Miss Linley. Nothing can be more certain.[1] We find the same whimsical gloom on Sheridan's part, and the same indignant suspicions on hers. Moreover—however high-flown these apostrophes now appear—Sheridan, the born sentimentalist, luxuriated in them, though he was forced to reduce and abridge them, as appears from annotations—apparently in his wife's handwriting—on the margin of the printed copy at Frampton Court. Yet the critics have not suffered him to transfer the workings of jealousy from his own experience, but have insisted on outside origins. It has been said that Falkland was copied from a "Beverley" (the name of Captain Absolute's double) in Murphy's "All in the Wrong." It might better have been urged that he was drawn from the "Falkland" of old Mrs. Sheridan's novel. Neither is the case, but the first conjecture

Cf. Act I., Sc. I. The citation from Sheridan comes from "The Critic," Act III., Sc. I.

[1] Out of many passages in the play take the following from Julia about Falkland: "Unused to the fopperies of love, he is negligent of the little duties expected from a lover—but being unhackneyed in the passion, his affection is ardent and sincere: and as it engrosses his whole soul, he expects every thought and emotion of his mistress to move in unison with his. Yet though his pride calls for a full return, his humility makes him undervalue those qualities in him which would entitle him to it; and not feeling why he should be loved to the degree he wishes, he still suspects that he is not loved enough." When Absolute says of Falkland that he is never punctual, we get another link in the chain of identity with Sheridan.

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is the least convincing. Murphy was himself a notorious plagiarist,[1] known as the author of "potted plays"—a phrase used of him at this period. Moreover, when the play is examined, there is little in the likeness but the common outlines of a tyrannical father and a self-tormenting son. The "Beverley" of "All in the Wrong" is not "the captious sceptic in love" that specialises Falkland: he merely presents jealousy in its accepted forms. Were an apter prototype wanted, the moods of "Valentine" in Wycherley's "Love in a Wood" might be nearer the mark, for though Sheridan is said to have denied any knowledge of Wycherley's plays, he must certainly have seen them acted at Bath. But here again the shape of the "fantastic goblin," as Wycherley styles jealousy, is purely typical. Falkland's alternations of perverted pride and humility are missing. After all, why should Sheridan have ranged afield when he could draw on his own consciousness? Much truer would it be to say that Goldsmith's "Marlow" echoed Farquhar's "Archer," and, indeed, this was said at the time of one whose "Grumbler" was a paraphrase from "Le Grondeur." The coincidence, too, of the name "Beverley" in both plays has been pressed for much more than it is worth. Those who run nomenclatures to earth seem to have forgotten that in Wycherley's play is a "Lydia," while a "Languish" is mentioned in Congreve's "Way of the World." Yet none would maintain that the name "Lydia Languish" was compounded from these separate sources. It is a waste of time to trifle over these appellations. From Congreve onwards they were bandied about from piece to piece, and Congreve himself has a Valentine in his "Way of the World." On such lines it could be argued that Pope's "Sir Plume" came from "Plume" in Farquhar's "Recruiting Officer," or that Dickens took Joey Bagstock's "devilish sly" from Fag's "devilish sly" in "The Rivals," which is more likely than the usual guess that he remembered Isaac's "devilish keen" in "The Duenna." Or, to take titles, it might as well be urged that "The Provoked,"

[1] Especially in the first scenes of Acts III. and V.

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"Husbands," and "Wives," "The Schools" for this and "The Schools" for the other which labelled so many comedies, lent them intrinsic affinity. Farquhar himself wrote "The Twin Rivals," and the sound may have suggested itself to Sheridan as suitable, but it would be absurd on that account to taunt him with theft. Pedigree is not plagiarism, and there is not a single dramatist of the Restoration, not Congreve himself, that does not repeat either Molière or a compatriot. So true is the sentence that Sheridan penned in his preface to "The Rivals" about "faded ideas" floating "in the fancy like forgotten dreams."

A curious instance may be given of such sub-conscious influence. In a notebook for "The School for Scandal" Sheridan wrote "commit matrimony," and this was perhaps an echo from the "commit matrimony" of Farquhar's "Sir Harry Wildair." Decades afterwards Byron wrote "commit flirtation," and he had probably heard the phrase from Sheridan in his age. To crown all, both Congreve and Farquhar agreed in comparing matrimony with the gallows. Nor are such coincidences confined to "faded ideas." In one of the rarest pamphlets of Sheridan's day, a rhymed "Epistle" in his name to Dundas, Grey's thin yet windy arguments in Parliament are ridiculed as follows:—

> "Then draw them out with pompous, vapid air,
> As mountebanks do ribbands at a fair."

The same simile occurred in a fine speech made by Disraeli some fifty years later, yet who would pretend that this pamphlet was his quarry?

But some really "faded ideas" in "The Rivals" must be examined. Mrs. Malaprop has been purposely left to the last. And Mrs. Malaprop, whatever may be said of her predecessors, abides the queen of solecism and undethroned by time. Her pedigree is long, and the family runs, with many side-branches, from Shakespeare's Dogberry and Verges and a word or so of Bottom's, to Lady Plyant in Congreve's "Double Dealer," who speaks of "mathemacular demonstration" and "the strangest

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quandary and *premunire*"; from her again, to Fielding's Mrs. Slipslop, and Smollett's Clarinder and Tabitha Bramble.[1] Yet Sheridan never studied this family tree. What he took, he took from his own mother's unfinished and unpublished manuscript of "A Journey to Bath" (now safe in the British Museum), the comedy in which a "Mrs. Surface" keeps lodgings.[2] Several of her son's Malapropisms are placed on the lips of her "Mrs. Tryfort" (that stage-name, too, is traditional), a vulgarian striving to appear "quality." From this half-sister it was that Sheridan drew Mrs. Malaprop's "contagious countries." "My Lord Stewkley," says Mrs. Tryfort, "is so embellished, Mr. Surface, nobody can be embellished that has not been abroad. Oh, if you were to hear him describe *contagious countries* as I have done, it would astonish you. He is a perfect map of geography." From her also Sheridan borrowed his "progeny of learning." "Lord Stewkley," chatters the irrepressible campaigner, "is a *progeny*, a perfect progeny. He takes as much pains to teach my Lucy and make her illiterate as if he were her master absolutely. He is a terrestrial man altogether, and so free and comprehensive." Thirdly, and this exhausts the list, Mrs. Tryfort reproves "Edward Bull," her daughter's lover, much as Mrs. Malaprop rebukes Lydia Languish. "Let me tell you,

[1] The two citations from Congreve come from "The Double Dealer," Act II., Sc. V., and Act IV., Sc. IX.

[2] Add. MS. 25975. The fourth act is missing. Fraser Rae reprinted this play in an edition full of inaccuracies. Subjoined are a few of the first act alone from a comparison of the manuscript with his version :—

P. 265	LADY F.	"As much devoted to *me*" (not "you").
265	LORD S.	Bottom of page "yes" omitted, "and the fruits."
266	LADY F.	"Tolerable tranquillity with*out* taking love" etc. "interests."
269	STAP.	"*Miss* Tryfort. I have heard the name."
270	SIR JO.	"Gadzooks."
272	Act I., Sc. III.	"*e'er* a man alive," not "e'en."
273	LADY F.	"*where* ever I meet her," "not when."
274	CHAM.	"*un*polite," not "impolite."
277	LADY BELL.	"there are people here," delete "some."
277	LORD S.	"intirely *up*on your account."
278	CHAM.	"*were* a little timorous," not "are."

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so much taciturnity does not become a young woman." The rest of Mrs. Tryfort is Malapropian but not Malaprop. "I declare," she ejaculates, "you are so inarticulate in your notions, I believe you are a changeling." "Lord, where's your taste?" she says to Mrs. Surface; "I thought you were a woman of speculation." And again, "Ever since the agitation of your fortune," she tells her daughter, "I resolved you should marry a lord. I left London on purpose that you might abdicate him."[1] These loans from his own mother are not large, and they are certainly justifiable. Mrs. Tryfort would never have survived but for her undying counterpart whose patronising archness and rich vocabulary distinguish her tropes from the plain blunders of her predecessor. There is no trace there of "headstrong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile," speaking "laconically;" none of "not a superstitious article in it," of "the pineapple of politeness," the "soft impeachment," the "violent memories," or of Lydia's "most observing thumb"—a Congrevian expression, like the "d——d disinheriting countenance" in "The School for Scandal";[2] not a trace, either, of the "limited quantity of back," or of that immortal diatribe on the circulating library, or (save for the "contagious" countries) of Mrs. Malaprop's (and old Sheridan's) panorama of education. What, then, is the sum of the whole matter? Mrs. Malaprop is the quintessence of her type, and to the type she adds a fruitiness of flavour which is all her own. When she quotes "Harry Mercury's" "an eye like March to threaten and command" (the travesty which Tickell thought overdone), or

[1] Mr. Lloyd Sanders in his "Life" has given a few of these, but he misnames Stewkley "Hewkley." He also notices that Sir Jeremy in the play says, "Thank Heaven, the family pictures are still extant," and supposes that O'Trigger may have been thus indebted to Edward Bull's uncle. (cf. pp. 31—34). But he is mistaken in fancying that Lydia may have been Mrs. Sheridan. Lydia might more safely be guessed to have been Mrs. Tickell in girlhood, for Wilkes mentions her as a romantic miss. From her self-portraiture in her letters Mrs. Sheridan is certainly Julia.

[2] Congreve speaks of "persuading faces" ("Old Bachelor," Act V., Sc. VII.), and of "a very forgetting night" ("Love for Love," Act IV., Sc. XII.).

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when she lugs in Cerberus, we are tempted to think that Lady Miller, the Sappho of Bath, may have sat for part of the portrait.

Other "faded ideas" too there are that have passed unnoticed. When Sir Anthony gloats over the charms of the bride that he destines for his son with "Then, Jack, her neck," we are reminded of Farquhar's Sir Harry Wildair and his "Then her neck"; while the "Innocent Adultery" which is put into "The Whole Duty of Man" among the novels jumbled together for Lydia, recalls a similar phrase in Congreve's "Old Bachelor"; and the "d——n it with a *but*" is a direct echo of Shakespeare. More of such instances will occur when we discuss "The School for Scandal." Yet none of these are genuine plagiarisms, for the plagiarist robs from poverty and on purpose, without enhancement or transformation. "Petty writers," observes Beaumarchais, "fuss about petty sayings," and Sheridan, too, in a preface, smarting under insinuation, trounces "the little puny critics who scatter their peevish strictures in private circles, and scribble at every author who has the eminence of being unconnected with them." Such missiles belong to the old warfare between the "men of leaves," as Beaumarchais termed them, "and the men of letters," a campaign extending from Pope and Dryden to Byron and Landor. "By the buzz of the insects," exclaims the last, "you may know that the summer has come"; while Erskine, in his political romance of "Armata," ingeniously compares the course of such criticisers to the crawl of an insect on a marble floor, of which it only discovers "the inequalities."

It has been said without warrant that "The Rivals," like "The School for Scandal," was compounded of two earlier and discarded plays. But we have Sheridan's own word for the fact that, save for a scene or so transferred from an intended farce, the play was dashed off red-hot in the autumn of the preceding year.[1] Its haste is shown by the inordinate length

[1] Cf. Sheridan's letter to Linley of November 17, 1774, transcribed by Moore, Vol. I., p. 123: " . . . I had not written a line of it two months ago except a scene or two which I believe you have seen in an odd act of

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which marred its first production, and this very diffuseness conflicts with the theory of an amalgam. Sheridan had not time to be elaborate.

Since its first performance the originality of its plot has never been questioned. The *Morning Chronicle* then sought to maintain that its hero's double identity was copied from Cibber's "Double Gallant," a play more than sixty years old, and itself a double duplicate of Mrs. Centlivre's "Love at a Venture," and of Burnaby's "Visiting Day." Lydia too, the same journal asserted, was borrowed from the heroine of Steele's "Accomplished Fools," a piece so obsolete as to be ignored by contemporary dictionaries, and so obscure that its name can scarcely have been known to Sheridan. The love-sick miss is common stage property, her interest depends on treatment, and Lydia is the Blanche Amory of the seventeen-seventies. Indeed, Sheridan might have spent all his time in reading the library which his critics have collected for him. Such libraries matter very little, the wit and humour matter a great deal.

"The Rivals" is the sole play by Sheridan where the humour exceeds the wit, and on that account it is the more lovable. We laugh with his characters more than we smile at their sayings. The wit lacks the steely-brightness of "The School for Scandal," and the humour has a modern turn. When Mrs. Malaprop illustrates her maxim that in matrimony "'tis safest to begin with a little aversion," by "I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he had been a blackamoor," we seem to catch the voice of Dickens. The short interlude where Fag mimics the spleen of his master and vents it on the footboy is humour Thackerayan. And when the uncle rages at his cool nephew with "None of your passion, sir, none of your violence, if you please," and tells him to "get an atmosphere and a sun of his own," we realise our distance from the Georgian drama.

The autograph of "The Rivals" is said to have been burned at Covent Garden Theatre, and no manuscript of it is known to

a little farce." In his "preface" he says, "The season was advanced when I first put the play into Mr. Harris's hands."

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exist. The play, even after it had been cut down, suffered from over-length, and Sheridan's anxiety to shorten it is shown by the timing of the acts which is annotated in the Frampton copy of the first edition.[1] In that copy fresh names are added to the *dramatis personæ*, and previous additions are erased.[2] The first edition too contains passages which have since been excided. For example, just after Sir Anthony's outbreak against circulating libraries, Mrs. Malaprop is made to observe, "Well, but, Sir Anthony, your wife was fond of books," and her interlocutor to reply, "Aye—and injury sufficient they were to her, Madam.—But were I to choose another helpmate, the extent of her erudition should consist in her knowing her simple letters, without their mischievous combinations;—and the summit of her science be—her ability to count as far as twenty. The first, Mrs. Malaprop, would enable her to work 'A.A.' upon my linen;—and the latter would be quite sufficient to prevent her giving me a shirt No. 1 and a stock No. 2"—a judicious cut, it must be acknowledged. In like manner Mrs. Malaprop's *billet doux*, in the second scene of the second act, was originally different and longer; while the close of the first scene of the third was interpolated with an extra outburst from Sir Anthony.[3] The original play, Sheridan's

[1] The whole is timed for "three hours," the first act for "28 minutes." The first edition of "The Rivals" contains an errata-leaf. The epilogue is placed in the preliminary matter, and the catchword "epi" by error at the end. It is made up of one hundred pages. Its title runs, "The Rivals, A Comedy As it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, London. Printed for John Wilkie, No. 71 St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1775." It ran to another edition in that year, to a third in 1776, a fourth in 1778, and a fifth in 1791. There was a Dublin edition in 1793. For a complete list cf. the Bibliography in the Appendix to Vol. .II

[2] In Act III., Sc. IV., Acres was made to say, "My nerves are become Catgut, my sinews wire, and my heart pinchbeck." In the ordinary first edition, too, occurs a new oath on his lips, "odds bottles and glasses."

[3] Before Mrs. Malaprop's "Female punctuation forbids me to say more," Sheridan inserted, "As my motive is interested, you may be assured my love shall never be miscellaneous," and the "Delia" signature of her letter to Sir Lucius has the prefix of "yours, while meretricious." In the colloquy between uncle and nephew, instead of the short paragraph in which Sir Anthony speeds Absolute to his betrothed, the following passage occurs after

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preface informs us, was more than double the usual length, and length was not the sole fault of "The Rivals"; there were repetitions and redundance. "Snug lying in the Abbey" is reiterated, and Mrs. Malaprop's "pineapple of politeness" was originally matched by "an orange of perfection."[1]

"The Rivals" is an essentially English play. It did not make the same circuit as "The School for Scandal" was to do, but it soon found its way to Germany, where it was acted in a Minorite cloister. Strangely enough, on that occasion the young Kotzebue, who long afterwards afforded Sheridan his "Pizarro," doubled the parts of Julia and of Acres. Nor is this the sole instance of a man taking a woman's part in the drama, for years afterwards Dowton acted Mrs. Malaprop. It is not generally known that the converse happened also, in an instance which attests the freshness of Sheridan's characterisation. Readers of "Piozziana" will remember how on one occasion Mrs. Siddons locked herself in a room with Mrs. Thrale and acted the part of Sir Anthony Absolute "quite inimitably." The comedy was translated into French as well as into German, and when the English actors performed at Paris in 1827, their first representation was that of "The Rivals."[2] At home it circulated like wildfire. Bath welcomed it immediately after its first run in London, and Polly Linley wrote happily to her sister of Dick's triumph, of the brilliant acting and excellent scene-painting; while in portions of the epilogue she discerned —and perhaps rightly—Mrs. Sheridan's hand.[3] Before August

"Hang your respect and duty." "SIR A. But come along with me, I'll write a note to Mrs. Malaprop, and you shall visit the lady directly. ABS. Where does she lodge, sir? SIR A. What a dull question! Only in the Grove here. ABS. O! then I can call on her on my way to the coffee-house. SIR A. In your way to the coffee-house! You'll set your heart down in your way to the coffee-house, hey? Ah! you leaden-nerv'd, wooden-hearted dolt!"

[1] Cf. the *Public Ledger* for January 18, 1775.

[2] For most of these particulars cf. Mr. Brander Matthews's excellent introduction to the play in his "Sheridan's Comedies," p. 76 (1885).

[3] The *Morning Post* for January 28 had said the same of the whole. For Polly Linley's letters of February 18, March 9, and August 27, 1775, cf.

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it had been given with the greatest success at Southampton and Bristol, where George Canning's mother took the part of "Julia." Since its *début* it has never left the stage, though for the last three decades it has been revived more rarely than heretofore.[1] One more scene arises in this connection. When Sheridan had already passed the age of his Sir Peter Teazle, his son Tom and his beautiful wife took part in a private performance of his father's comedy at The Priory, where the Marchioness of Abercorn (a beauty for whom Sheridan wrote several of his *jeux d'esprit*) presided. The ageing author superintended the rehearsals, and averred afterwards that never had the characters been better impersonated.

The first performance of "The Rivals" attracted a crowded and brilliant house. The social success of the Sheridans provoked some envy, and the author was known though he was not named. It is plain from contemporary news that a claque was organised both in and outside the theatre against the play. A whole chorus hissed disapproval, a faction was ejected from the gallery, and it was said that even the boxes witnessed a challenge. Only the epilogue escaped, but even that was

Moore, Vol. I., pp. 138—140. Edwin acted Sir Anthony, Didier, Absolute, and Diamond, Falkland, "a new actor," says the correspondent, "of great merit and sweet figure." Jackson was Sir Lucius, Brunsdon, Fag, and Keasberry (one of an acting family), Bob Acres. Mrs. Wheeler played Mrs. Malaprop, her daughter, Lydia ("literally," again adds the future Mrs. Tickell, "a very pretty, romantic girl of seventeen"); Julia's part was played by a Mrs. Didier and Lucy's by a Mrs. Brett. The writer agrees that parts of the epilogue relating to women's influence show some signs of Mrs. Sheridan's handiwork, but they had certainly been polished and amended by her husband. In three years (1775—1778) "The Rivals" was printed four times, and each time with many editions. The British Museum catalogue (as given by Mr. Anderson in Mr. Sanders's "Sheridan") is by no means complete as to further reprints of this play. It omits the London ones of 1793 and of 1797, though it gives that of 1791 and the Dublin one of 1793. And cf. *post*, Bibliography in Appendix to Vol. II.

[1] In England the Vaudeville revival of 1882, when Mrs. Sterling stamped Mrs. Malaprop to the life, the Haymarket revival of 1884 by the Bancrofts, and the much more recent revival at the same theatre by the Maudes, will recur to the recollection. In America Mr. Jefferson's revival in 1880 is celebrated. Cf. Mr. Brander Matthews's "introduction," just cited.

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given out to be Garrick's. The play itself was damned. Its blemishes—length, exuberance, and drawn-out sentiment—were fair game, but its very beauties were blamed and belittled as second-hand. One of the journals, it is true, owned that in the very imperfections might be traced "the man of genius, the gentleman and the scholar," and they protested "tenderness" to a "novice" and a "young bard." But on the whole nothing would content them. It was all a bungle. The piece was voted "insufferably tedious," and its naturalness was resented as much as had been Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer." More point and polish, more artificiality, might mend though it could never save so immature an achievement. These cavils gave Sheridan a distaste for the play which he never surmounted, and that itch for polish which over-refined "The School for Scandal." When "The Rivals" was revived with *éclat* in 1791, Sheridan wrote to the future Lady Holland, who was then still Lady Webster, "I had rather you would not listen to the play from my good will to the Author, and yet I would not have your attention otherwise engaged."[1]

The clamour was directed almost as much against the actors. Quick, the lightest of comedians, played Acres, a part which, it was alleged, "betrayed him into farce." Miss Barsanti, noted (like Dickens's Miss Snevellicci) for her archness, was warned that she was "a mere mimic." An old stager, Mrs.

[1] Holland House MS. In the press notices the praise and part of the blame is quoted from the *Morning Chronicle*. The critiques of the *Public Ledger* and the *Morning Post* were the least, and those of the *Scorpion* and of a correspondent in the *Gazetteer* for January 20 the most favourable. Mrs. Malaprop was termed "an exotic beyond the wilds of Nature." For the epilogue and Garrick cf. the *Gazetteer* for January 21. For the malice cf. a letter of a "librarian" in the *Morning Post* for January 20, where it is called "the gulph of malevolence." The *Morning Chronicle* for January 25 went so far as to hint that if Sheridan would consent to accept a lucrative engagement just offered for the oratorios the house would be packed. For this, as well as for the doings of the audience, cf. *London Chronicle* for January 21—24, which details the uproar, and states that "there was never so much crowding known as at the new comedy of 'The Rivals' on Tuesday last, and it was remarked that there had not been seen so many ladies and people of fashion at a first night's representation for a long time."

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Green, bore the full brunt of Mrs. Malaprop's unpopularity. Lewis, who enacted Falkland, only received praise because "he struggled with a very difficult character." Mrs. Bulkley, the Julia, was applauded, but mainly on account of the epilogue, which she recited. Shuter, who played Sir Anthony, forgot his words; and Woodward, who played the hero, was assured that he had "often appeared to greater advantage." Lee-Lewis, a noted harlequin, as Fag, and Dunstall, a stand-by of Covent Garden, as David, "exhibited their accustomed pert valet and country bumpkin"; while Mrs. Lessingham, as Lucy, was only spared by being sheltered under the wing of Mrs. Bulkley. The severest rebuke, however, was reserved for Lee, who as Sir Lucius deeply offended the Irish. His representation was declared to be "an affront to common sense . . . and so far from giving the manners of our brave and worthy neighbours that it scarcely equals the picture of a *respectable Hotentot* [*sic*], gabbling in an uncouth dialect, neither Welsh, English nor Irish." Lee protested in a letter to the *Morning Post*, and a patriotic outburst in Sheridan's preface was the consequence. On the second night, however, the part was transferred with less odium to Clinch, and Sheridan, who in despair had thoughts of throwing the piece overboard,[1] was induced by Harris, the manager, to withdraw it for revision. The croakers were jubilant. "The author," said the *Morning Chronicle* of January 19, "willing to show his obedience to the will of the town, withdraws his comedy that he may prune, correct and alter it, till he thinks it worthy the public favour. The new comedy was in the Green Room of Covent Garden but last week deemed the *ne plus ultra* of comedy."

Sheridan was disappointed but not depressed. He felt that the play must succeed if he re-shaped it. His wife, indeed, if Creevey's after-memory is to be trusted, felt almost relieved. She was at Slough when tidings of the *fiasco* reached her, and she thus wrote to her husband: "My dear Dick, I am delighted. I always knew that it was impossible you could

[1] Cf. *Morning Post* for January 19, 1775.

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make anything by writing plays; so now there is nothing for it but my beginning to sing publickly again, and we shall have as much money as we like." High offers in fact were immediately renewed for her performances, but on all these Sheridan again laid his embargo. "No," according to Creevey, said Sheridan, "that shall never be. I see where the fault was; the play was too long, and the parts were badly cast."[1] The manager aided and advised him. "I profited," his preface ran, "by his judgment and experience in the curtailing of it—till, I believe, his feeling for the vanity of a young author got the better of his desire for correctness, and he left many excrescences remaining because he had assisted in pruning so many more. Hence, though I was not uninformed that the acts were still too long, I flattered myself that, after the first trial, I might with safer judgment proceed to remove what should appear to have been most dissatisfactory. Many other errors there were which might in part have arisen from my being by no means conversant with plays in general, either in reading or at the theatre."

The revised "Rivals" appeared on the evening of Saturday, January 28, in association with a "new musical entertainment" called "The Two Misers." It met with marked success, and the journals changed their tone, though even now correspondents complained of its onslaught on libraries and the fancifulness of Lydia's character.[2] To this and other charges of unlikelihood Sheridan might well have replied with Beaumarchais in his preface to "The Barber," "*Une chose est elle invraisemblable, parce qu'elle était possible autrement*"—possible alternatives form no ground for improbability. One of his

[1] Cf. the Creevey Papers, Vol. I., p. 55. His recollection is supported by the advertisement in the *Morning Post* for January 25, which a note has already cited, of the tempting overtures made for her performance. One, Smith had again approached Sheridan on this score in the previous November. Cf. Sheridan's letter to Linley of November 17, 1774. Creevey's further recollection is faulty. He says the play was reproduced after an interval of six weeks.

[2] Cf. *Morning Post* for January 23 and 30. For the exact date of the second performance cf. *ibid.* for January 28, and for the play then associated with it, the *Gazetteer* for January 30.

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excisions was even regretted, and we may be glad that it was promptly restored. It is the bit in the first scene of the fifth act where Lydia figures her lover frozen by his devotion. "How often," she ejaculates to Julia, "have I stole forth, in the coldest night in January, and found him in the garden, stuck like a dripping statue!—There would he kneel to me in the snow, and sneeze and cough so pathetically!—he shivering with cold, and me with apprehension! And while the freezing blast numbed our joints, how warmly would he press me to pity his flame, and glow with mutual ardour! Ah, Julia! that was something like being in love."[1]

Thus the play that had limped at first ran for fourteen or fifteen nights in succession before the close of the season on June the first, and in those days a fortnight of one piece was a large allowance. Sheridan's dramatic reputation was established, his pockets were replenished, and by mid-February commendatory verses appeared in the newspapers, of which the subjoined is a sample :—

> "Three comic poets in three different sheets
> All wrote at once—a thing one seldom meets;
> The first in liveliness of thought surpassed;
> In sentiment the next; in both the last;—
> Thalia wished her credit to increase,—
> So had the 'Rivals' for one perfect piece."[2]

Sheridan had coaxed the critics into good humour, and in this good humour they have since persisted. "The Rivals" was twice revived in the early nineties, and it was acted during 1797, the year of Miss Farren's retirement from the stage. The play took its place in the Drury Lane performances of September, 1816, which honoured Sheridan's memory, and added fresh lustre to his name.

The author was grateful to the actor who, by taking on the *rôle* of Sir Lucius, had saved the situation. Clinch was needy and his family large. A benefit performance was arranged,

[1] The complaint is made in the *Morning Post* for January 30, 1775.
[2] *Morning Chronicle*, February 10, 1775.

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and the playwright resolved to make it a success. In forty-eight hours he produced his short farce of "St. Patrick's Day, or the Scheming Lieutenant," which was acted at Covent Garden on May the second, 1775, with Clinch as "Lieutenant O'Connor," the Irish lover and soldier.[1] It was five times repeated before the summer began.

Its plot is simple. The lieutenant impersonates a doctor in order to win the daughter of an anti-military judge—a ruse like Almaviva's in Beaumarchais' "Barber of Seville," which first took the French stage in the February of this very year. As yet, however, it had not reached England, and the similarity—far-reaching in other respects between the two intellects—is one of those many thought-transferences which permeate an epoch's atmosphere. The trifle remains in a manuscript, the first four pages of which are almost without erasure, but it was not printed till many years later,[2] and has long been obsolete. It has no pretensions, but the characterisation is clever, and there are streaks of Sheridan's wit. "There is nothing on earth so impudent as an everlasting blush," "Lauretta was a runaway name," and the soldier-husband who returns "like a Colossus with one leg at New York and the other at Chelsea Hospital," may serve as specimens. "I won't die, Bridget," says the

[1] For the speed of its composition cf. a sketch of Sheridan's life in the *Beau Monde* for November, 1808. It should be noticed that old Sheridan's poor farce of "Captain O'Blunder, or the Brave Irishman," treats of such a soldier in a way much inferior.

[2] It was reprinted in Cumberland's "British Theatre" in 1829, but the writer has been told that a separate copy of it was issued about 1800. In the MS. the fourth scene is continued in Mrs. Sheridan's hand. The whole is signed "S" with a flourish, and a triumphant "Finis" afterwards. The original cast was as follows:—

"Lieutenant O'Connor . . .	Mr. Clinch
Dr. Rosy	Mr. Quick
Justice Credulous	Mr. Lee Lewis
Sergeant Tronna	Mr. Booth
Corporal Flint	——
Lauretta	Mrs. Cargill
Mrs. Bridget Credulous . . .	Mrs. Pitt."

The beautiful Mrs. Pitt was painted both by Ramsay and Romney.

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Justice. "Psha, there's nothing in it," replies his wife. "Aye, but it leaves a numbness behind that lasts for a plaguey long time," is another of its Sheridanisms. The piece lacks prologue or epilogue.

When the mock-physician prescribes for his sweetheart's father in a dog-Latin that puns upon his thoughts, the play, as printed, gives the words in a form so mangled that it conveys neither sense nor nonsense. The manuscript, however, supplies the true version and wholly omits a very bad pun about rowing in a boat to Fulham, which may have been actor's gag. "Pisonatus," says the play; "Poisonatus," wrote Sheridan: "Diable tutellum," says the play; "Diabit Tantalum," wrote Sheridan: "Damsellum Livivum suvum rislibani," says the play; "Damsellam luvum cum videbam," wrote Sheridan.

But the third event of this year was the first performance on November the twenty-first, and once more at Covent Garden, of his celebrated opera, "The Duenna," for which his father-in-law composed the score. Four days earlier, Sheridan's only son, Thomas, had made his entrance into the world at Orchard Street, and into the fashionable world, for Lady Westmoreland was one of his godmothers.[1] The operetta had no higher aim than money, and it succeeded beyond its author's wildest expectations, running seventy-five nights, ten more even than the "Beggars' Opera," with all its political sting, had run nearly half a century earlier; and it was acted, as the first edition records, "with universal applause."[2]

[1] For the date of his birth cf. *Morning Post*, November 17, 1775. Mr. Fitzgerald, in his "Lives of the Sheridans," has antedated Tom's birth by more than six months. Lady Westmoreland long continued an affectionate interest in Tom's welfare. There is a letter from her to Sheridan about him in 1810. Cf. Add. MS. 29764, f. 55.

[2] So, too, the *Public Advertiser* for November 23, 1775, says that it is "universally approved." The next day's issue gives a *résumé* of the plot. Not only, as has been mentioned, was Sheridan's mother's play of "The Discovery" revived as a Drury Lane foil to the Covent Garden triumph, but at Covent Garden itself in early December his father took a benefit night in the character of "The Roman Father"—a piece not acted for eight years. The Sheridans were now in the ascendant. Cf. *Public Advertiser* for December 8, 1775.

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"THE DUENNA"

It is difficult now to realise the stir that it made—a sensation not merely of the moment, but retained in full vigour for fifty years. Three main considerations may help to explain why a play with no first-rate characterisation save in parts of "Isaac Mendoza," and with a dialogue much below Sheridan's best, thus took and held the town. In the first place, the music fitted it like a glove. Linley and Sheridan consulted and thoroughly understood each other, as may be seen from their correspondence.[1] Then, in its form, it was a new departure. The previous operettas by O'Hara, Bickerstaffe, and others had been a tinkling farrago of dull dialogue and forced songs—a divorce between the sound and the sense. "The Duenna," on the other hand, was a coherent whole, and the songs which Sheridan introduced into it were, many of them, his own love-lyrics fraught with the romance and passion of his courtship and alive with that personal experience which alone enabled him to strike the lyre. The refrain of his duels runs through the romping prose of "The Rivals," that of his elopement haunts the measures of "The Duenna." And again, it was original in a kind of colloquial grace remote from the stiff conventions of the period, and it added wit to music, though most of its persons are monotonous, and reality is out of the question. It was as an *opera bouffe* that it succeeded, and for operetta of this description intrigue and liveliness are more requisite than fidelity to life. "The Duenna" bristles with brisk action. It moves even where it does not breathe, and its motion is quick, changeable and pleasing. Of all Sheridan's plays it is the best constructed, and its tangle of imbroglio is unwound with consummate ease.

Its plot has been ascribed to two plays which in truth have nothing to do with it, and with only one of which Sheridan could have been acquainted. The "Siciliens" of Molière he can scarcely have known. It contains some disguises and serenades, but otherwise it is wholly dissimilar.

[1] This has been partly pointed out by Mr. Brander Matthews in the biographical sketch which introduces his admirable edition of "Sheridan's Comedies" (1885).

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Wycherley's "Country Wife," with its episode of a woman in male attire, bears no more relation than does "As You Like It," to a piece centred on an elderly frump disguised as a lovely girl, and the perplexities of a double elopement. The local colour, like Beaumarchais', is Spanish, but, in Sheridan's case, its source cannot be tracked unless it be sought in his mother's early novel of "Eugenia and Adelaide." As for the music, many of Linley's airs would now give the impression of some Handelian tune played on a worn-out musical-box. Charming as many of them are, they would ill accord with the modern appetite for smart burlesque. They are faded miniatures. Harmonies rather than tunes, they recall the slow stateliness of minuet or the quick fugues of contre-danse—strains such as Marie Antoinette might have sung to her harp in the little Trianon. On the first page of the manuscript Sheridan has written the old line, "Go, rose, and die where I would be,"[1] and this strikes a keynote of the Cavalier minstrelsy. Something of its lilt pervades his lyrics, while the faint cadence of a bygone generation solemnises their accompaniment. It was objected at the time to Linley's setting that some of it was too like church music for operetta, and Sheridan, in the detailed correspondence between him and his father-in-law, seems to have disliked the contrast.[2] Both words and songs exemplify Sheridan's combination of prosaic elegance with romantic audacity, and they also exemplify his frequent lapses, for, side by side with verses of extreme beauty, stand banalities like these:—

"My mistress expects me, and I must go to her,
Or how can I hope for a smile?"

[1] The autograph manuscript (now at Frampton Court) is contained in a copybook, on the back of which is a rough sketch of a sea-battle. The third act is missing. The first act is in Sheridan's hand, the second in his wife's. The manuscript ends with his song of "A bumper of good liquor."

[2] Cf. the letters of October and November, 1775, transcribed by Moore, Vol. I., pp. 157—166. Linley's music to "The Duenna, a Comick Opera as performed at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden," was published at the time by "Harrison, Cluse & Co., No. 78 Fleet Street." The libretto of the songs was printed both in octavo and quarto by Wilkie in 1776, price "sixpence" and "one shilling" respectively. The writer owns copies of all these.

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With the best of these songs and their past occasions the reader is now familiarised. The autograph discloses that "I ne'er could any lustre see,"[1] was at first erased, while "What bard, O Time, discover" was an addition; so too was "When a tender maid," which appears on a separate sheet; so too, the sad song "When Sable Night" and the merry one "If a Daughter you have, she's the plague of your life." And besides these were several, neither sung nor printed. One is the duet between Isaac and Don Jerome in the second scene of the second act, to which reference has been made in a note to a passage dealing with Sheridan's attitude towards women :—

"DON J. Dominion was given
To Beauty from Heav'n,
Pleasing bondage to the mind;
Will you then alone
Its worship disown ?—

Is. Never could I favour find,
But when for my pain
I meet with disdain.

DON J. Coax her, kiss her till she's kind,"

while another in the same act was well omitted :—

"When the maid that we love
No entreaties can move,
Who'd lead a life of pining ?
If her charms will excuse
The fond rashness we use,
Away with idle whining."

Still another, "How oft, Louisa," is absent from the first issue. Missing too, and unfortunately missing, is that charming "Ah, cruel maid," with which we have made acquaintance. The

[1] Cf. *ante*, Chapter III. It has already been noted that a snatch by Congreve suggests the refrain. The sole other "plagiarism" in "The Duenna" is the metaphor of the mummy derived from Halhed, though it was old when Halhed used it: "These amorous orgies that steal the senses in the hearing; as they say Egyptian embalmers serve mummies, extracting the brain through the ears" (Act I., Sc. III.). And cf. *ante*, p. 285, *n.* 1.

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manuscript shows it to have been one of his after-thoughts, and though it was eventually eliminated, it appears in the book of the songs and in the various Irish editions.

There are variants also. Perhaps the most striking is one which has a double interest. It concerns Sheridan's old theme, the ruin of friendship by rivalry in love, and it exhibits that blend of subtlety and simplicity which often stamps his workmanship. The last stanza of Antonio's song in the first act—"Friendship is the bond of Reason"—reads:—

"The faith which to my friend I swore
As a civil oath I view
But to the charms which I adore
'Tis religion to be true."

But two discarded renderings attest how he could simplify the form in transposing the conceit. The first ran:—

"And should I cheat the world as thee
One smile from her I love to win,
Each breach of human faith would be
A sacrifice and not a sin."

While its successor was:—

"And if to one I false must be
Can I doubt which I must prefer—
A breach of social faith with thee
Or sacrilege to Love and Her?"

But the most popular song of all—one which long went the round of every rollicking assembly—required no such refinements. It is simple even to baldness, and a single stanza will suffice to show how trivial it has become:—

"O the days when I was young,
When I laughed in fortune's spite,
Talked of love the whole day long,
And with nectar crowned the night.
Then it was, old father Care,
Little recked I of thy frown,
Half thy malice youth could bear,
And the rest, a bumper drown."

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These cannot compare with the play's other bacchanalian chorus, "A bumper of good liquor," which has a swing and a ring of its own; or even with "Father Paul's" "This bottle's the sun of out table." Still less can they be set by those tender love songs which are worthy of a poet. But somehow or other they suited the taste of their time, and outlasted two generations.

Both dialogue and songs were considerably shortened. "Give Isaac the Nymph," for instance, another favourite, was docked of two extra but mediocre stanzas;[1] nor would the fact deserve a mention but for a line which excepts green eyes from the list of colours which it praises. Sheridan's second wife had green eyes, and, in his later correspondence, he was to dote on them as "emeralds." And with the play was curtailed its *dramatis personæ*, while some of its names were altered.[2] Sheridan's manuscript at first entitled the men "signor," which may have been corrected to "don" by Leoni (Braham's future instructor), who impersonated Don Carlos. That character was originally intended to have been Isaac's cousin, but since Leoni was a Jew, this affinity was abandoned.

Technicalities are irksome, but a personal interest attaches to some of them. We have dwelt on the continual bearing of the lyrics on Sheridan's own love-story, which the operetta constantly reveals. Donna Louisa, like Miss Linley, takes refuge in a convent and, like her, sends a letter to assuage her parent, and Miss Linley again is recalled by the sentence asserting that suffering for a man is the essence of a woman's attachment, and by another, existing in manuscript alone, and bringing back her sentimentality: "She read a novel that was on the toilet, then she flung the book on the bed and

[1] One sample will be enough:—

"To one thus accomplished I durst speak my mind,
And flattery doubtless would soon make her kind,
For the man that should praise her she needs must adore
Who ne'er in her life received praises before."

[2] A "Don Pedro" figured as cousin to Clara, and instead of "Lopez" there were two other servants, "Manuel" and "Lisetta."

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wept, and then she said, 'his tears,' and prayed." There is a tincture, too, of the preface to "The Rivals" in "Nothing but your insignificance saves you"; and an adumbration of Joseph Surface in "Nothing is so contemptible as a knave who is the dupe of his own art." Strokes like these give salt to a piece which in the main has lost its savour. Apart from its lyrics, indeed, "The Duenna" is dead as Queen Charlotte. It ranks in the long list of obsolete innovations, and resembles some early-Victorian cabinet, well inlaid and once admired, but now hopelessly out of date. And yet the piece brims over with jollity, though much of its wit has perished. Most will remember the six-weeks Christian who "has left his religion for an estate and has not had time to get a new one," who "stands like a dead wall between church and synagogue, or like the blank leaves between the Old and New Testament." But few know of Isaac's retort when the unsuspecting father palms off the veiled duenna as a beauty, and urges that his "Louisa" "has the family face." "Yes, egad," replies the disgusted miser, "I should have taken it for a family face and one that has been in the family some time;" "her teeth," he adds, "are just like the keys on a harpsichord, alternately black and white." Among the similes, too, is one of an unskilful gunner "who usually misses his aim and is hurt by the recoil of his own piece"; and among the metaphors, "the tears of turpentine down those deal cheeks," a trope which a detective might claim as an appropriation from Burke were it not that Burke's sentence about "iron tears" and "Pluto's cheek" succeeded the operetta by fourteen years. Some good things Sheridan expunged: the comparison of the "dead wall" was crossed out at first. And, among omissions, there is the "brother" who in love affairs "is as convenient as a confidential chambermaid," and the face "on which Time and Deformity have engrossed their titles." In a humorous paragraph Isaac involuntarily makes himself out to be one year old, while a line which should have been his has also yielded to the pruning-knife: "When I encounter a scornful glance from her brilliant eyes, I always feel ashamed, egad, of being—myself."

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The play was well cast, though some of the names were new, and one of the minor actresses threw up the sponge at the last moment. Leoni, indeed, was a host in himself. His pathetic voice and high favour with great ladies proved potent attractions.[1] Quick—Lamb's "retired Diocletian of Islington"—enacted Isaac, and Mrs. Green, who first impersonated Mrs. Malaprop, now took the part of the Duenna. No "authorised" English book of the play is known till 1794, and, indeed, even this was unauthorised by Sheridan, who expressly told his second wife that he had never sanctioned any versions of his works except "The Critic," "Pizarro" and his pamphlet on the East India Bills. But at least as early as 1785 "The Duenna" was printed in Dublin, where for some years it had been acted with mutilations, and in 1793 it reappeared there under the style of "The Governess," with changed names and gagged dialogue. Two travesties, one a parody misnamed "*La Governante*," were published in London. The other and earlier one was the first of the poor political skits which were to accompany Sheridan's plays. From its mock preface, which has the air of being modelled on a real dedication to Garrick, it would almost seem as if a surreptitious edition of the play might have crept into immediate notice, while its title-page has often confused it with the subject of its satire.[2]

[1] Sheridan wrote of him to Linley, ". . . He sings nothing well, but in a plaintive or pastoral style, and his voice is such as appears to me always to be hurt by much accompaniment." Contemporary satires banter his *bonnes fortunes*.

[2] "The Duenna, a Comick Opera . . . . As it is performed by His Majesty's Servants." It deals with Lord North, was written by a Grub Street scribbler named Israel Pottinger, and printed by "S. Johnson, London, near the Obelisk." This seems to be the edition catalogued as one of "The Duenna" itself in Mr. Anderson's "Bibliography" appended to Mr. Sanders's "Sheridan." The material part of the dedication (which has the motto "Quid rides, fabula dete") runs as follows: "Sir, though this opera has never been performed in *your* theatre and may be considered as in some degree the exclusive property of the other house, I cannot refuse this only opportunity I can now enjoy of testifying my high sense of your merit as an *Actor* and *Man*, while you are resting from the busy scenes of public life, crowned with laurels that will never fade. . . . Long may you

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The play not only added to the author's laurels, but substantially to his purse, while his receipts comprised a share in the sale of the music.[1] "The Duenna" did more than run, it galloped. "We have given it a respite this Christmas," wrote Sheridan on the last day of the year, "but nothing else brings money. We have every place in the house booked for the next three nights, and shall at least play it fifty nights with only the Friday's intermission."[2] A Mr. Ormsby presented Prince Fortunatus with "a silver branch," which evoked a characteristic comment. "This will cost me," wrote the recipient to his father-in-law, "what of all things I am least free of, a letter. And it should have been a poetical one, too, if the present had been any piece of plate but a candlestick! I believe I must melt it into a bowl to make verses on it, for there is no possibility of bringing candle, candlestick or snuffers into metre. However, as the gift was owing to the muse, and the manner of it very friendly, I believe I shall try to jingle a little on the occasion; at least a

live, Sir, in the full enjoyment of every temporal blessing, and late, very late, retire from the scene amidst the acclamations of applauding angels. Thus wishes your ardent admirer, the Author, June 18, 1776." The other parody is "La Governante, or the Duenna, the poetry by Mr. Badini, the music by Signor Bertoni, London, 1779." The Dublin perversion of 1793 is "The Governess, a Comic Opera by R. B. Sheridan, Esqre. Adapted for Theatrical Representation as performed at the Theatres Royal Drury Lane, Covent Garden and Smock Alley. Regulated from the Prompt Book by permission of the Manager. Dublin. Printed by Graisberry and Campbell for William Jones, No. 86 Dame Street." It contains lines in inverted commas which are stated as "omitted in representation." The duenna herself is named "Ursula," and Isaac "Enoch Issachar." Lady Morgan's father Owenson acted "Don Octavio." This edition shows that "The Duenna" eventually became a stock piece of Drury Lane. The Dublin edition of 1785 is comprised in a "volume of plays" of that date, and is absent from the British Museum Catalogue. Cf. the Bibliography in the Appendix to Vol. II. Sheridan's statement about authorisation comes from a very late letter about his verses to Mrs. Crewe, headed "Saturday evening." Cf. Sheridan MSS.

[1] Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 160. Mrs. Sheridan helped her husband to test the singers. Cf. Moore's "Life," Vol. I., p. 190.

[2] On account of Leoni. Sheridan to Linley, December 31, 1775. Moore's "Life," Vol. I., p. 184.

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few such stanzas as might gain a cup of tea from the urn at Bath Easton."[1]

The results of these successes went further, they tinged his whole after-life. In the first place they proved the means of reconciling his father.[2] From one of Sheridan's letters to Linley while "The Duenna" was in rehearsal, we know that Sheridan looked forward to a speedy reunion. From Moore we learn how the sight of his father in the audience and of the sisters who had been forbidden to speak to him, cut him to the quick at this hour of triumph, and from Angelo that his parents were instrumental in healing the breach before the close of the year. Nor was it long before old Sheridan became his son's theatrical manager, just as Dickens's father became his young son's secretary. After a brief interval, during which Linley and a certain Younge acted as makeshifts, Sheridan senior lent his theatrical experience as director, but within two years his dictatorial temper embroiled him with Garrick, while the irregular payment of his salary embittered him against his son. Nothing, he wrote to Charles Sheridan, could have been baser than Dick's conduct; yet it was admitted that a little forbearance would have set everything right. As it was, he hugged his grievance until, two years before his death, he softened his heart. Many expressions in many letters of Sheridan's wife and younger sister show how deeply Sheridan felt the severance, and how affectionately he strove to bridge it over. The second rupture happened in 1778, and from its sequels, it is likely that Mrs. Sheridan must have been active now in bringing father and son together. Few could withstand her softening influence, and more than once she propitiated the sullen anger of "old Surlyboots."[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

[2] In a letter to Linley of December 31, 1775, Sheridan speaks of showing his father a note from Garrick relative to preliminaries for his acquisition of Garrick's share in the theatre. Cf. Moore, Vol. I., p. 182.

[3] The authorities for the preceding are Mrs. Sheridan's letters to Mrs. Alicia LeFanu from Harrow in 1782, LeFanu MSS., old Sheridan's letters in the Sheridan MSS., allusions in Elizabeth Sheridan's letters to her sister

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And in little more than a year Sheridan's new plays brought him a fresh olive-branch. While his father prolonged his feud with Johnson, the philanthropist made amends by praising the son, who, after "the two best comedies of the age," was surely, sir, "a remarkable man." These praises may have been heightened by Sheridan's tribute to the biographer of the Poets, in a prologue to Savage's "Sir Thomas Overbury," altered by William Woodfall, the reporter, and revived at Drury Lane in February, 1777, the month of the "Trip to Scarborough."[1] But for some time Sheridan had been a favourite with Sir Joshua's circle, and his name is among the signatures to the round-robin beseeching Johnson to revise his epitaph on Goldsmith—a petition drawn up by Burke and presented, in fear and trembling, by the painter. The Doctor's kindness did not stop at praise. None could be more jealous than its founder, of the Literary Club, which met now in Gerrard Street, now in St. James's, and numbered the choicest spirits of its day. He honoured the young playwright by proposing him, and Dick Sheridan was elected on March 14, 1777, about a month before "The School for Scandal" made its first bow to the world. Gibbon and Garrick, Burke and Reynolds, were of the company, and Charles Fox presided when Sheridan took his seat at the round table—a seat which the records show that he often occupied. He was

(LeFanu MSS.), and Mrs. Tickell's to Mrs. Sheridan (Sheridan MSS.), and a letter to Sheridan of March 27, 1782, from brother Charles hopes that the father and son are "very good friends by this." Sheridan MSS., and cf. Moore, Vol. I., p. 373.

[1] "Ill-fated Savage! at whose birth was given
No parent but the Muse, no friend but heaven.
* * * *
While at his death, nor friend's nor mother's tear
Fell on the track of his deserted bier.
So pleads the tale that gives to future times
The Son's misfortunes, and the Parent's crimes.
There shall his fame (if owned) to-night survive,
Fixed by the hand that bids our language live."

Johnson cannot quite have relished the "no friend," for he had shared bravely in Savage's short commons. The date of the performance appears in the first edition of the revised play.

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not ungrateful, and among those whom he employed in the succeeding year was Jack Desmoulines, the Doctor's *protégé*.[1]

With Fox Sheridan had made acquaintance shortly after the *début* of his first comedy. They professed themselves mutually enchanted, and the acquaintance soon ripened into a friendship pregnant with results, for Fox was Sheridan's "political creator."[2] Lord John Townshend used to declare that he it was who first brought them together at a dinner in the St. Albans Tavern, the then meeting-house of the Whig party. But Sheridan assured Lord Holland that it was Gibbon who first made him known to his future co-rebel against the Crown.[3] At this time Gibbon had been three years a member of the club, two a member of Parliament, and (since Goldsmith's death) the historical professor to the Royal Academy. It is a piquant picture, the dumpy and unsavoury *savant* introducing the dramatic wit to the political Alcibiades. Fox, in his wrath at Gibbon's after-acceptance of a Trade-Commissionership, wrote in his presentation copy of "The Decline and Fall," that the gentleman who stipulated on Monday for the heads of Lord North and his colleagues accepted a post under Lord North on Saturday. But Fox smarted under the King's displeasure, and in five years coalesced with the very minister whom he had anathematised. Gibbon then supported the Coalition, but Burke had

[1] Cf. Piozzi Letters, Vol. II., p. 41. Sheridan attended these reunions thirteen times, cf. Fitzgerald, Vol. I., p. 187; for the circumstances, cf. also Rae, Vol. I., p. 309. A conversation has been already recorded in our "Overture," *ante*, p. 86.

[2] Major Scott so calls him in his criticism on Sheridan's India Bill Pamphlet (1788).

[3] "Further Memoirs of the Whig Party," p. 349. Lord Holland, as usual, save in Fox's interest, discredited Sheridan in this trifle, but Sheridan's statement could have no ulterior motive, and his memory is preferable to the recollection of Townshend coloured by prejudice. Townshend's own account appeared in a letter which he wrote just after Sheridan's funeral, and it will be found in Eg. MS. 1975, f. 174. "I am one of Sheridan's earliest friends," he wrote. 'He, I, and poor Tickell (whose memory with all his faults will ever be dear to me) lived together in the closest habits of friendship from earliest life, long before Sheridan's introduction into public life—before 'The Duenna's' appearance—*before he was known to Fox, to whom I had the pleasure of first introducing him*," etc.

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abolished the Lords of Trade, and the historian himself tells us how he "was overlooked in the division of the spoil."

Thus Sheridan paved the way for his political career. His first theatrical triumphs also influenced his future in further directions. Garrick, like Johnson, though at loggerheads with the father, favoured the son; and as Sheridan had complimented Johnson in his prologue of 1777, so now, in an epilogue, he complimented Garrick. The play was "Semiramis," by Captain Ayscough, a guardsman-cousin of the unpopular Lord Sandwich, and as such assailed by the pamphleteers. The occasion was a benefit for decayed actors, and Sheridan sentimentalised rhetorically:—

> "When general plaudits speak the Fable o'er,
> Which mute attention had approved before,
> Tho' ruder spirits love th' accustomed jest
> Which chases sorrow from the vulgar breast,
> Still hearts refined their saddened tint retain—
> The sigh is pleasure and the jest is pain.
> Scarce have they smiled to honour Grace or Wit,
> *Though Roscius spoke the verse himself had writ.*"

A part of the conclusion is the best:—

> "Thus thro' the time when vernal fruits receive
> The grateful showers that hang on April's eve,
> Tho' every coarser stem of forest birth
> Throws with the morning-beam its dews to earth
> Ne'er does the gentle rose revive so soon,
> But bathed in Nature's tears, it droops till noon.
> * * * * *
>
> Thou child of sympathy, whoe'er thou art,
> Who with Assyria's queen hast wept thy part—
> Go, search where keener woes demand relief,
> Go, while thy heart yet beats with fancied grief.
> * * * * *
>
> Go—and on real misery bestow
> The blest effusion of fictitious woe.
> So shall our Muse, supreme of all the Nine,
> Deserve indeed the title of divine,
> Virtue shall own her favoured from above,
> And Pity, greet her with a sister's love." [1]

[1] The date, 1776, appears on the first edition of the play.

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Garrick already hoped to enlist Sheridan's talent, but Harris had put the young author under obligations to which he was loyal. The Drury Lane manager was piqued by "The Duenna's" popularity, which overtasked even his competition. Linley tried to soothe his restiveness by deprecating any withdrawal of his "protection" from a son-in-law who depended on these firstfruits for subsistence, since he persevered in forbidding his wife to sing. This was always a sore point with the composer, whom Sheridan had vexed by rebuffing an earlier applicant for that wife's performance on the plea that there were "twenty" more "Mrs. Sheridans" in the Linley household. Linley, too, had other causes for annoyance respecting "The Duenna." The monopoly of its music had not originally been reserved for him, and even afterwards, the scrappy way in which he received the libretto ruffled his temper. Garrick and Linley, both irritated, were now both appeased. How completely the former was pacified is shown during the next year by his warm espousal of Sheridan's claims and the pride he took in him as his successor. Even before "The Duenna" appeared, Linley, through Sheridan, had got wind of Garrick's impending retirement. The dramatist's bold plan of stepping into Garrick's shoes, and the composer's chance of directing the oratorios, must also have propitiated Linley.[1] The two plays, therefore, besides being peacemakers, had at length put Drury Lane, and even Parliament, within Sheridan's reach.

Nor were they less opportune for his social advancement.

[1] Sheridan at first invited young Tom Linley, Jackson, and even Dr. Harrington, to contribute the music, and he frankly told Linley that he was doing so. Cf. the letters of 1775—1776, transcribed by Moore, Vol. I., pp. 164, 184; and also the letters which contain Linley's complaints, transcribed by Fitzgerald, Vol. I., pp. 133—135. At the close of December, 1775, Sheridan told Linley that he wanted Tom Linley's name on the score (*ibid.*, p. 184), but it does not appear on the printed music ("The Duenna, A Comick Opera as performed at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, composed by Mr. Linley" [1776]). For Sheridan's early communication of Garrick's meditated withdrawal, cf. his letter to Linley of October, 1775 (Moore, Vol. I., pp. 157—159); and for his rebuff to the applicant, a letter to Linley of November 17, 1774 (*ibid.*, p. 123).

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"The Rivals" had made him the lion of a season, and the Duchess of Devonshire was now justified in her choice. This very spring her friend Mrs. Crewe gave a famous ball—a ball so famous that it was embalmed in verse.

Amoret, as she was called, now showed the zenith of her charms both mental and physical. The daughter of the all-accomplished Mrs. Greville,[1] she seemed to shrink from the universal notice which she attracted. Something dove-like there was about her that drew men to her side more powerfully and subtly than a bolder charm. Without seeming to wish it, she melted them into obedience, and her empire over their hearts was none the less exacting because its insignia were concealed. As Sheridan sang, in the verses which he presented to her with a manuscript of "The School for Scandal,"

> "Adorning fashion, unadorned by dress,
> Simple from taste, and not from carelessness,
> Discreet in gesture, in deportment mild,
> Not stiff with prudence, or uncouthly wild:
> No state has Amoret; no studied mien;
> She frowns no goddess and she moves no queen;
> The softer charm that in her manner lies
> Is framed to captivate, yet not surprise;
> It justly suits th' expression of her face,
> 'Tis less than Dignity and more than Grace."[2]

"She was in truth," Sheridan wrote of her in his age, "the handsomest of the set," and undoubtedly at this period, and for some years later, he fell under her sway,[3] which was not

[1] Authoress of the "Ode to Indifference."

[2] It has already been noted in Chapter III. that this line comes from one of Sheridan's early manuscript poems.

[3] In October, 1786, he wrote to the Duchess of Devonshire that his "heart was shut" against her; she had an "unhappy disposition." Cf. his letter transcribed in "The Two Duchesses," p. 111. She was indeed very indiscreet. In 1786, again, the Duchess writes to her mother, "Sheridan is very cross indeed—and Mrs. S. quite dreads going to Crewe, for the mistress of that house from her perpetual blunders and folly gets her all day long into scrapes." Devonshire House MSS., the Duchess to her mother, October 17, 1786. None the less, in 1792, she stayed with him at Isleworth. Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 295.

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Mrs. CREWE.

from a Mezzotint,

after the portrait by D. Gardner.

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without influence on "The School for Scandal." Beauty without mind never allured him, but the combination was irresistible. Mrs. Crewe was both beautiful and intellectual. Like the Duchess of Devonshire she was a political muse. With Burke she corresponded up to the year preceding his decease, and her glamour was such that Mrs. Tickell used to dream of her in a "milk-white riding-habit."[1] Fox, too, was her admirer, but Fox was hardly distinguished for chivalry towards women. He had already praised her perfections in verses at once fulsome and critical, but he stigmatised another belle in a manner that does little honour either to his heart or his head.[2]

Sheridan attended Mrs. Crewe's *fête* during his wife's absence at Bath. A bouquet of beauties adorned it: Georgiana of Devon, Isabella of Rutland, the Countess of Jersey, and the erratic Lady Craven. It was rumoured that Sheridan was courted and caressed, and after he had sent his wife the poem in which Sylvio assured Laura that it could not be Spring because she was not there, Laura retaliated by a longer one which betrays her misgivings, yet ends with a blissful reassurance. Since these graceful lines are the last to be quoted of

[1] Sheridan MSS., Tickell Corr.

[2] The following was his quatrain on the lady—a friend both of his and of all his set. The manuscript remains among the Sheridan Papers:—

"She loves virtue, yet none in her conduct you'll trace.
She loves truth, yet she'll lie till she's black in the face.
Her delicate feelings all wickedness shocks,
Yet her lover's Lord Robert, her friend is Charles Fox."

Sheridan's letter of recollection to his second wife is given in Chapter II., where it will be found that Mrs. Crewe was a source of inspiration for the later stages of his comedy. For his verses on Mrs. Crewe in 1775, cf. the "Annual Register." There is a copy of them in the Sheridan MSS.:—

"As on suns in the winter with pleasure we gaze,
But feel not their warmth tho' their splendour we praise,
So Beauty our just admiration may claim,
But Love and Love only the heart can enflame."

The songs on the ball are contained in "The Muses and Graces on a Visit to Grosvenor Square" (1775). One of them, "The Elopement of the Graces," is in the manner of Sheridan's "Clio's Protest."

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the Sylvio-Laura series, while their true occasion has passed unrecognised, a fragment (for they are lengthy) is subjoined:—

"Soft flowed the lay by Avon's sedgy side,
While o'er its streams the drooping Willow hung,
Beneath whose shadow Sylvio fondly tried
To check the opening roses as they sprung.

* * * *

To other scenes doth Sylvio now repair,
To nobler themes his daring muse aspires;
Around him throng the gay, the young, the fair,
His lively wit the listening crowd admires.

And see where radiant Beauty smiling stands
With gentle voice and soft beseeching eyes,
To gain the laurel from his willing hands,
Her every art the fond enchantress tries.

What various charms the admiring youth surround,
How shall he sing or how attempt to praise?
So lovely all—where shall the bard be found
Who can to *one* alone attune his lays?

Behold, with graceful step and smile serene
Majestic Stella moves to claim the prize;
'Tis thine,' he cries, 'for thou art Beauty's queen.'
Mistaken youth! and seest thou Myra's eyes?"

Stella is the Duchess of Rutland, Myra the Duchess of Devonshire. The remaining beauties defile before him. Mrs. Crewe, to whom he presents a pansy, is thus characterised:—

"With gentle step and hesitating grace,
Unconscious of her power, the fair one came;
If, while he viewed the glories of that face,
Poor Sylvio doubted—who shall dare to blame?"

But Mrs. Sheridan will not doubt him, and, as she looks on the grotto where their vows were plighted, she is confident of his love:—

"But where does Laura pass her lonely hours?
Does she still haunt the grot and willow tree?
Shall Sylvio from his wreath of various flowers
Neglect to cull one simple sweet for thee?

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'Ah, Laura, no,' the constant Sylvio cries,
'For thee a never-fading wreath I'll twine,
Though bright the rose, its bloom too swiftly flies,
No emblem meet for love so true as mine.

'For thee, my love, the myrtle ever-green
Shall every year its blossoms sweet disclose,
Which when our spring of youth no more is seen,
Shall still appear more lovely than the rose.'

'Forgive, dear youth,' the happy Laura said,
'Forgive each doubt, each fondly anxious fear,
Which from my heart for ever now is fled—
Thy love and truth, thus tried, are doubly dear.

'With pain I marked the various passions rise,
When Beauty so divine before thee moved;
With trembling doubt beheld thy wandering eyes,
For still I feared;—alas! because I loved.

'Each anxious doubt shall Laura *now* forego,
No more regret those joys so lately known,
Conscious that tho' thy breast to *all* may *glow*,
Thy faithful *heart* shall *beat* for *her* alone.

'Then, Sylvio, seize again thy tuneful lyre,
Nor yet sweet Beauty's power forbear to praise,
Again let charms divine thy strains inspire,
And Laura's voice shall aid the poet's lays.'" [1]

Sheridan was already celebrated, and he stood on the threshold of fame. By his own force and fascination he had conquered society at an age when most men are obscure. He was happy in his career and his home, and even the slight pang of his wife's jealousy closes with a comedy-like ending. Well for him would it have been if it had thus remained—if he had never brought trouble and even tragedy into their lives.

[1] Cited by Moore, who misdates them 1777, Vol. I., pp. 203—207.

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CHAPTER X

HIGHER

(From the Transfer of Drury Lane to "The School for Scandal"—June, 1776, to May, 1777.)

[THE ACQUISITION OF THE THEATRE—"THE TRIP TO SCARBOROUGH"—"THE STATESMAN"—"THE FORESTERS"]

"FASHION: So, Lory, Fortune, thou seest, at last takes care of merit! We are in a fair way to be great people.

"LORY: Aye, sir, if the devil don't step between the cup and the lip, as he used to do."

SHERIDAN, "*Trip to Scarborough.*"

GARRICK bade farewell to Drury Lane on June the tenth, when, for the last time, he acted Don Felix in Mrs. Centlivre's "The Wonder." The whole audience wept when the greatest actor-manager of any country or century told the public how sorely he felt the parting. Exactly a fortnight later Sheridan signed the contract which made him part proprietor and chief controller of the historical theatre on whose summit still beckoned the statue of good augury.

That arrangement and its upshot involve some new details outside those which have been hitherto disclosed. Much mystery was made of how a new author could have raised the funds for so large a purchase, and when the subject was broached long afterwards Sheridan used to laugh, murmur "the philosopher's stone," and rush out of the room. His touchstone, however, was merely the dull flint of mortgages and annuities, and the gold of its alchemy belonged to his "most useful ally," Dr. James Ford, of Albemarle Street, the Court physician and favourite, the sole capitalist of the group long connected with the theatre except Garrick and Garrick's solicitors, Wallis and Troward. It will be found that the real

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troubles, only irretrievable after the rebuilding of the house in 1793, originally sprang not from Sheridan's present side of the bargain, but from an old mortgage to Garrick nominally entered into by his hereditary partner, young Willoughby Lacy,[1] but really by Dr. Ford, who, through Garrick in early days, had thus advanced the money for Lacy's original half-share. And this mortgage was not for £22,000, as has been surmised, but for the large sum of £31,500.[2]

No sooner was Garrick's abdication in sight than eager applicants presented themselves, the chief of whom was George Colman, actor and playwright; but he refused to treat unless the entire property could be transferred, and Garrick be associated with him in the management. It says much for Sheridan's tact and intrepidity, as well as for the manager's belief in them, that his choice fell on this youth of twenty-five. When in the next year it was objected that none could replace "Atlas," Garrick answered that in Sheridan he had secured a very Hercules to prop the stage, and before the negotiations were closed Hercules wrote to his father-in-law, "I'll answer for it we shall see many golden campaigns."[3]

[1] Young Lacy had begun as an actor. His father had long been Garrick's partner.

[2] Cf. (in the Sheridan MSS.) an unnoticed communication of March 29, 1789 (ten years after Garrick's death), from Sheridan to the Duke of Bedford. "Wallis," it says, "finds himself obliged to call in without delay a large mortgage due on a moiety of the property to Mr. Garrick's representatives. Dr. Ford, who has now no interest in the theatre, but remains on the security of this mortgage, has been applied to," etc. In the Garrick Corr. for 1778 is a letter threatening to call in the sum and specifying it. Garrick calls his demand "a thumper." For some further particulars about Dr. Ford the writer is indebted to his descendant, Captain Richard Ford, who by his marriage with a daughter of Lady Gwendolen Ramsden has reunited the Fords and the Sheridans. Dr. Ford's son, Sir Richard, also a friend of Sheridan's, was the magistrate who first instituted the mounted police, and became a member of the Government. His son was Richard Ford, the conversationalist and author of the Spanish Handbook, and his son again was Sir Clare Ford, the Ambassador.

[3] Sheridan to Linley, January 4, 1776, Moore, Vol. I., p. 188. "Lacy" (whom he spells "Leasy"), says Sheridan in his next letter, "is utterly unequal to any department in the Theatre. He has an opinion of me, and

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Up to June, 1776, the ownership of the theatre's patent had been equally divided between Lacy and Garrick, who in thirty years had trebled the value of a property now computed at £70,000, with a return of 10 per cent.[1] Lacy stood out to retain his share, though it was weighted by the mortgage above mentioned, and £35,000 was required for the acquisition of Garrick's.

Sheridan had recourse to his kinsman Ewart, who, however, backed out; but the indispensable Dr. Ford contributed as much as £15,000 for five-sevenths of this half-share. Linley contributed £10,000, which he raised at 4 per cent.[2] For Sheridan was reserved the remaining £10,000, and he obtained it at a capital expenditure of only £1,300. Seven thousand seven hundred pounds he raised by a mortgage to Ford, £6,000 of whose own share he also guaranteed. One thousand he obtained at a stroke by a mortgage of two annuities to Garrick's solicitors. The cash balance may have come from his own pocket; but it should be noticed that Ford's own share was mortgaged for an extra thousand, and if this was not for the law expenses (which were extortionate) it may have been handed on to Sheridan in the general shuffle of security and counter-security attending the transactions of men forced to create capital by forestalling income.[3] The whole structure

is very willing to let the whole burthen be taken off his shoulders." For Garrick's reply, cf. Murphy's "Life," Vol. II., p. 143. For Colman, and the preliminaries with Garrick, cf. Sheridan's letter to Linley of January 4, 1776 (*ibid.*, p. 185). Colman remained friendly with Sheridan and was one of those to whom he showed the MS. of "The School for Scandal." Colman also wrote prologues and epilogues for him.

[1] Cf. Sheridan's letters to Linley of December 31, 1775, and January 4, 1776 (*ibid.*, pp. 183, 186).

[2] From a manuscript *précis* of the matter in the British Museum, Winton Collection, B. K. S., 3, i., 2, it appears that Linley raised his share by a bond to Garrick, and also by a charge on part of his Bath estates.

[3] For the new information regarding Sheridan's original endeavour, cf. B. M. Winton Collection, B. K. S., 3, i., 2. These documents comprise the particulars presented for counsel's opinion on the construction of the investment clause in Mrs. Sheridan's marriage settlement, of which her father was now the sole surviving trustee. It should be added that the

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was thus founded on the quicksands of loans and mortgages. It must be admitted (and this is new matter) that Sheridan had originally endeavoured to raise part of his share out of his wife's dowry, for the settlement permitted the trustees to invest in leaseholds. By this means he intended to create annuities in his wife's favour. But counsel were consulted, their opinion proved adverse, and this expedient had to be thrown overboard. It was rumoured too that Sheridan had been indebted to Garrick. As a fact he did not owe him a penny.[1] Garrick himself joined his partner in urging Sheridan to purchase the whole undertaking by at once taking up Lacy's (or rather Ford's) mortgage. But this fell through for the present, and happy would it have been for the younger manager if, in the near future, he had steeled himself against this temptation.[2]

Lacy was an old friend of the Sheridan family, and Angelo

£1,050 Consols which formed Mrs. Sheridan's portion, is represented in the same document as "£1,500." This is probably a slip. These papers also include the bill of costs, and records of sundry payments, from which it appears that Linley's salary was to be £500. As regards Ford's quota, it was to have been less if Ewart had co-operated. Ford's share was raised by a mortgage for £16,000 to Garrick's solicitors, and guaranteed by a deposit of securities (which Ford alone could furnish) to the value of £21,000 with the Hammersleys, who banked for the theatre. The counter-acceptances of the proprietors were also demanded. Cf. an unnoticed letter among the Sheridan MSS. of December 24, 1776, from Sheridan to Thomas Westley, treasurer of Drury Lane: ". . . Although securities to the amount of £21,000 are lodged in the hands of Messrs. Hammersley & Co., with a power of sale at the end of four months from the 4th of this present December to indemnify them against the engagement for £16,000 for the payment of Mr. Wallis, yet as they declare they understood that they were to have the counter-acceptances of the Proprietors of Drury Lane, we hereby authorise you to accept the same," etc. The mortgage to Ford by Sheridan for his share and the new fact that Sheridan bound himself jointly with Ford in £6,000, being part of the latter's share, are recited in a document which Sheridan drew up in Ford's house on June 21, 1776. This holograph was sold at Sotheby's in November, 1903.

[1] Miss LeFanu also expressly denies any indebtedness to Garrick in her "Memoirs of Mrs. Frances Sheridan."

[2] For Garrick's advice in 1776, cf. Sheridan's letter to Linley of January 4, 1776, already cited. We shall see immediately what happened when Sheridan absorbed Lacy's share two years onwards.

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remarks on his presence at a Christmas party soon after Sheridan's marriage. Garrick's transfer whetted his appetite, nor would he rest satisfied till a market had been found for his interest also. Found it was before the end of the year in two friends, Langford, the auctioneer (who preceded Robins), and Thomson, playwright and officer. A secret bargain was soon in train, but before it could be struck the would-be purchasers tried to meddle with the management. This Sheridan would not brook. With Garrick's approval he ceased to attend the theatre, remonstrated, threatened, and then engineered a general strike of actors, which soon brought his young acquaintance to his senses. Though the Press severely censured this barring-out, Garrick throughout stood behind Sheridan, and he must have smiled at his favourite's humorous account of the manœuvre: ". . . Indeed," wrote the ringleader, "there never was known such an uncommonly epidemic disorder as has raged among our unfortunate company. It differs from the plague by attacking the better sort first. The manner, too, in which they are seized, I am told, is very extraordinary. Many who were in perfect health at one moment, on receiving a billet from the prompter to summon them to business, are seized with sudden qualms, and, before they can get through the contents, are absolutely unfit to leave their rooms: so that Hopkins's [the prompter's] notes seem to operate like what we hear of Italian poisoned letters, which strike with sickness those to whom they are addressed: in short, if a successful author had given the company a dinner at Salt Hill, the effects could not be more injurious to our dramatic representations. And what has been still more alarming is, that those who being indisposed sent for our doctor, found themselves on the first visit (an effect which doctors often produce) worse than they were before, with this difference only in the process, that instead of learning his patient's case, he related his own. However, I hope we shall be able to procure a *bill of health* very soon: and as their confinement stands entirely on the ground of their dislike of playing under they know not whose management, I shall be particularly cautious that there shall be no precedent for sickness, as I have been

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from giving any authority for it: and indeed I believe they were most of them actuated by the same considerations and obvious foresight of the event which had induced me to desist from any part in the direction. . . . We dine together to-day at Wallis's, when the affair must be decided. . . . I have run this vile scrawl (which I beg you will excuse being written in haste) to such a length, I have scarcely room to say how much we feel your friendship in the business."[1] This hurried note shows how natural to Sheridan were the ornate similes which he loved to trim, and on what easy terms he now stood with the delighted Roscius, with whom he constantly confabulated in Adelphi Terrace or at Hampton. Lacy apologised, surrendered with effusion, and welcomed the conqueror to his revels at the Isleworth house which long afterwards Sheridan was to occupy.[2] Before two years were gone he had disposed of his share to the man who had "bested" him. The price was now fixed at over £45,000, an appreciation in six months of some 30 per cent.; and once more Sheridan rose to the occasion, for not only did the vendor receive no cash, but the purchaser repaid his liabilities and cleared a profit. The process was quite simple. Sheridan, this time without partners, took over the fatal mortgage to Garrick, or at any rate the greater part of it, and in payment for the equity of redemption bound himself in two annuities of £500 each. These two annuities, together with the bigger amount of the Ford-Lacy mortgage, constituted the sum required, while at the same time he signed a bond with Lacy and others guaranteeing the punctual payment of interest. But his keenness to be sole proprietor cost him dear. The annuities proved a dead weight, and in two years the interest on the mortgage fell into arrear. Garrick threatened to enforce the

[1] Part of a long letter to Garrick of October 15, 1776, transcribed by Mr. Fitzgerald in his "Lives of the Sheridans," Vol. I., pp. 191—195.

[2] In 1792, when it was leased by him from Mrs. Keppel, herself the tenant of Mr. Walpole. At these frolics Colman declaimed on the table, the guests sat up all night and then rushed out in the summer morning to swimming or fencing matches. Captain Thomson, "Jerry Orpin" (Mrs. Lacy's brother), young Ewart, and Angelo, who relates them ("Reminiscences," Vol. I., p. 53), figured in these festivities.

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covenant, and somehow the money was paid.[1] After Garrick's death, however, the interest again languished, and this miserable mortgage hung like a mill-stone round Drury Lane, which, with all drawbacks, so increased in value as to be worth £130,000 during the course of the next twelve years.[2]

But Sheridan did more than settle his old score. He distributed his own share of £10,000 between Ford and Linley, and was thus able both to pay off the two mortgages to which it was subject, and to retain an amount exceeding the £1,300 which he had originally disbursed.[3] Save for Dr. Ford's share, which now stood at £20,000, and Linley's, £15,000, which remained in the family, he had engrossed the whole ownership of the concern. But the theatrical Atlas tried to support too many worlds.

[1] The interest of £1,100 is expressly recorded as paid in the Drury Lane accounts in the Sheridan MSS. And cf. Garrick's letter of 1778, already cited from the Garrick Corr., which Garrick endorsed "Lacy paid the difference." In the above account of Sheridan's negotiation with Lacy I have followed and added to Mr. Brander Matthews's lucid review of the combined effect of Moore's and Watkins's incomplete and only half-correct statements. Cf. his "Biographical Sketch" prefacing his edition of Sheridan's "Rivals" and "School for Scandal," p. 30. He is ignorant of the Garrick letter, nor could he be aware of the true amount and circumstances of the mortgage divulged by the Sheridan Papers, or of the particulars in the Winton Papers. Following Watkins, he rightly takes the mortgage to be for £31,500, but he thinks that Sheridan assumed its whole amount. From the fact, however, that Lacy also guaranteed the payment of interest, it would appear that Sheridan only undertook the greater part. This is confirmed by the further fact narrated by Mrs. Sheridan in 1789, that when this very mortgage had to be paid off, Sheridan actually managed to pay £18,000. Cf. Sheridan MSS. Dr. Ford, however (who eventually went to France), and his son had long cause to complain of these and future transactions. Linley got into trouble with Garrick at this juncture by some paragraphs which he inserted in the *Morning Chronicle*. Cf. his letter of vindication to Garrick dated "Norfolk Street, 20th May, 1778," and transcribed by Fitzgerald, Vol. I., p. 199.

[2] So stated in a rough statement by Sheridan of the position in 1793 (Sheridan MSS.). For the continued arrears after Garrick's death, cf. "Piozzi Letters," Vol. II., p. 238 (1792).

[3] Linley seems to have mortgaged his share for £11,000 to Wallis and £4,000 to Ford (cf. Fitzgerald, Vol. I., p. 204).

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In 1780 his unwise ambition led him to absorb Dr. Ford's share also. No documents remain directly bearing on this purchase; but from the frequent introduction in subsequent papers of Joseph Richardson's name (and Sheridan's gifted friend was now dabbling with the drama), it is likely that he, too, bore a part in this rearrangement.[1] The wonted loans, counter-loans, and squabbles over security can scarcely have been absent. The moment, too, was singularly inauspicious. Sheridan was then on the verge of entering Parliament, yet about the same time he further embarrassed his affairs by obtaining an interest in the opera-house or King's Theatre in the Haymarket. No wonder that he was reproached with neglecting Drury Lane! Irksome letters exist regarding his contested claim to five boxes in this concern, and in December, 1781, his wife wrote with a sigh of relief from Harrow to her sister-in-law Alicia, that Dick was at length quit of his share and its worries.[2] Not long afterwards, however, he embarked afresh on the venture of the Pantheon. He seemed to exult in complicating disaster and to take absolute pleasure in these theatrical martyrdoms and suicides. After 1780 Dr. Ford's

[1] Two of Ford's "renter's shares" were transferred on September 10, 1785, by Sheridan to Westley, the treasurer of the theatre (Sheridan MSS.). Richardson's eventual share in the theatre was one-sixteenth, or some £11,000. A letter from him among the Sheridan MSS. of "July 5, 1793," and headed "Essex Street," runs as follows: "Gentlemen, by agreement between Mr. Sheridan and me, whenever my sixteenth share of Drury Lane was resumed a consideration of £250 was to be paid to me. That event having taken place, I request you to place the above sum in the hands of Mr. Westley, whose receipt will be a sufficient discharge." In the rearrangement of 1793, then, Richardson was to be paid off, but after his death in 1803 his widow still had a share in the theatre, and I have seen a letter to her from Sheridan of 1811 in which he exerts himself to the utmost to serve her.

[2] Cf. LeFanu MSS., Mrs. Sheridan to Alicia LeFanu, "HARROW, Friday December 20 [1781]." "The sale of the Opera House is likewise a very great relief to him, as it was impossible for him to attend to so many concerns without being imposed on at one time or the other." The letters about his five boxes were written in September, 1778, to W. Sleigh, and are to be found in Eg. MS. 2137, ff. 170 *et seq.*

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only interest in Drury Lane was the Lacy mortgage, which has been emphasised. Nine years later matters came to a head in this case also. The mortgage was called in, Dr. Ford was abroad, and his son appealed to Sheridan. What then happened redounds to Sheridan's credit. No juncture could be less opportune. The Duke of Bedford was dictating onerous terms for the renewal of the lease. Sheridan wrote to him that he would accept any conditions rather than weaken the security for the mortgage which still hampered his friend. And when the settling day arrived he astonished his wife by himself paying Wallis no less than £18,000.[1]

Despite some natural jealousy, Sheridan's advent was welcomed at Drury Lane, and in a subsequent collection of satirical epitaphs that on Sheridan commemorated the feeling.[2] But though Sheridan's accession was unquestioned, the slipperiness of his rule contrasted painfully with Garrick's

[1] Cf. Mrs. Sheridan's letter already referred to, and her husband's of March 29, 1789, to the Duke of Bedford in the Sheridan MSS. ". . . I have no scruple, however," Sheridan writes, "of informing your Grace that the sense I have of the hardship of Dr. Ford's being compelled to pay the debt, and the embarrassment the claim has placed him in would at any time decide me to agree to any terms that tended to relieve him." And yet Sheridan has been vaguely blamed by writers unacquainted with the facts for his conduct to Dr. Ford.

[2] Cf. "The Abbey of Kilkhampton" (5th edn., 1780), p. 84. After heroising Garrick and calling him his successor's "directing spirit," it ends as follows:—

"Yet, mirth-fraught Comedy, cloud not thy laughing brow with pale dejection,
Haply the much-beloved Partner of thy fond Festivity
Though snatched from thy embrace,
Will teach some kindred mind, dawning now with gentler
Inspiration, to emulate his glories."

Much later on Pasquin, in a periodical called *The Devil*, wrote the following of a parody on the "Deserted Village":—

"Vain, transitory splendours could not all
Reprieve the mimic monarch from his fall,
Obscure he sinks, forgot his worth and name,
For S[heridan] forbids the smallest fame."

Cf. Angelo, "Reminiscences," Vol. I., p. 324.

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orderly foresight. Sheridan trusted to the turn of the wheel, and his own power to retrieve disaster at the last moment, when he was calm among panic-stricken subordinates. How lightly his mind could play with the humours and jealousies of the stage was to find permanent expression in the matchless fun of his "Critic."

The season perforce started with Garrick's remnants, several of them tragedies resembling comedies, and the rest, comedies with a tragic ending. Sheridan paid Roscius the compliment of reviving his "Christmas Tale," a poverty-stricken piece, only noticeable because nine years earlier it had been the first to employ the signal talent of De Loutherbourg, the artist and scene-painter, whom old Angelo introduced to Garrick.[1] Dryden's version of Shakespeare's "Tempest," with songs interspersed by Sheridan and set by Linley—what a compound!—added to the patchwork, and Colman's "New Brooms" led off the list. Folks were not particular in those days of short runs and quick changes, and they acclaimed an epilogue which Sheridan penned for this Shakespearean travesty.[2] Not till the beginning of 1777 could Sheridan begin to choose

[1] Cf. Angelo, "Reminiscences," Vol. II., pp. 326—329.

[2] This epilogue is none other than the one as to the occasion of which Moore confesses his ignorance. Cf. Vol. I., p. 337. It is charmingly written, and contrasts the vocal woods of May with the scenic groves of the theatre now that Garrick, its "Rossignol," had left them. It ends as under:—

"O hapless we whom such ill fate betides,
Hurt by the beam which cheers the world besides!
Who love the lingering frost, ice, chilling showers,
While Nature's *Benefit*—is death to ours;
Who, witch-like, best in noxious mists perform,
Thrive in the *Tempest* and enjoy the storm.
O hapless we, unless your generous care
Bids us no more lament that spring is fair,
But plenteous glean from the dramatic soil
The vernal harvest of our winter's toil."
Etc., etc.

The accounts show as many as thirteen performances of this Dryden version of "The Tempest."

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for himself. But during this interval he brooded over "The School for Scandal," on which he had been long engaged, polishing it again and again till it shone like a burnished table. And he was busy with other plays which must soon be noticed. "The Rivals" had taught him a lesson, and Bob Acres's "There is nothing like polishing" formed his motto for a year in which "The Rivals" was transferred from the Garden to the Lane, and there played no less than one hundred and fifty-three times to the tune of the then large sum of over £1,800.[1] Nor was the pruning-knife—"Zounds the axe!" adds Puff in "The Critic"—less in perpetual requisition than the polish.

Irregular glimpses of the wayward manager are gleaned from stray letters in theatrical correspondence. Cross-grained and obsequious Cumberland calls, hat in hand, with one of his eternal tragedies, sees Sheridan yawning over the fifth act, hears his excuse of sitting up for two nights in succession, and artlessly ascribes the yawn to dissipation. Distracted Hopkins grumbles over delaying actors and delayed scenery, over the postponed pantomime and the mischances of "Much Ado About Nothing."[2] The blame for these cannot be laid wholly at Sheridan's door. Actors were always in revolt, shamming sickness or clamouring for rise of salary. It had been so even under Garrick, and no sooner was his iron hand removed than largely increased pay was demanded. Moreover, an old rent-charge of £325 which hung over the theatre had been just revived by the Walpole family.[3] The crown of Drury Lane, never an easy burden, proved heavy indeed for its new king, but luckily Mrs. Sheridan was its queen. She kept the accounts, read the plays, helped the songs and smoothed the difficulties.

Meanwhile Sheridan devised a stop-gap for the boards. He

[1] Drury Lane Accounts, Sheridan MSS. in Mrs. Sheridan's neat handwriting.

[2] Cf. Fitzgerald, Vol. I., p. 198.

[3] "Lord Walpole's rent was first laid on 1775—1776." MS. Drury Lane Accounts, Sheridan MSS.

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had already emulated Garrick by trying to refine some of Congreve's comedies, but, as he once observed, Congreve's wit took flight with his freedom, and in eliminating his grossness you emasculated his strength.[1] With Vanbrugh, whose rougher wit is only the surface of a kindly humour, it was otherwise. So to Vanbrugh he turned and produced an expurgated version of "The Relapse." Vanbrugh himself had started by adapting Fletcher's "Pilgrim," but Garrick's rehabilitation of Wycherley's "Country Wife" formed Sheridan's model in this cleansing of the comedy. His mother had called her last effort "A Journey to Bath"; Cumberland had entitled a wearisome play "A Trip to Newmarket"; Sheridan, whose parents seem once to have visited the northern watering-place, styled his bantling "A Trip to Scarborough," and it was first acted on February 24, 1777.

In a clever prologue (and of this *genre* Sheridan was a master), ringing the changes on change, he thus defined his purpose :—

> "As change thus circulates throughout the nation,
> Some plays may justly call for alteration—
> At least to draw some slender covering o'er
> That graceless wit which was too bare before.
> Those writers well and wisely use their pens
> Who turn our wantons into Magdalens;
> And howsoever wicked wits revile 'em,
> We hope to find you in their stage-asylum."

Frances Burney's Evelina blushed to hear Congreve's "Way of the World." That blush Sheridan forestalled[2]; he practised what Vanbrugh had preached. "I'd have men talk plainly what's fit for women to hear without putting 'em

[1] In "The Critic," too, he makes Dangle observe: "No *double-entendre*, no smart inuendo admitted; even Vanbrugh and Congreve obliged to undergo a bungling reformation!" to which Sneer replies: "Yes, and our prudery in this respect is just on a par with the artificial bashfulness of a courtezan who increases the blush upon her cheek in an exact proportion to the diminution of her modesty."

[2] "Evelina" was published in the following year, 1778.

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either to a real or an affected blush."[1] A picturesque incident attended another part of this prologue. Sheridan thus bantered the fashion and *coiffures* of the ladies:—

> "Were they designed to be, when put together,
> Made up like shuttlecocks of cork and feather?
> Their pale-faced grandmamas appeared with grace
> When dawning blushes rose upon the face.
> No blushes now their once-loved station seek,
> The foe is in possession of the cheek.
> No heads of old too high for feathered state
> Hindered the fair to pass the lowest gate:
> A church to enter now they must be bent,
> If ever they should try th' experiment."

The Duchess of Devonshire promptly appeared in the Royal Box at Drury Lane with an enormous tuft of pink ostrich feathers on her head, "to convince the world, we suppose," adds the newspaper which remains among some of her papers, "notwithstanding what was advanced in the humorous prologue, that her Grace's head-dress was the true *bon ton*."

It has been assumed by such as have not troubled to compare Vanbrugh's dialogue closely with Sheridan's, that he introduced nothing of his own, and altered little in the structure of a comedy which hinges on the humours of a fop, the arts of a coquette, and the romps of a hoyden. Moore himself only notes two Sheridanisms, both of them on the lips of "Lord Foppington." "You should always remember," says the beau to his hosier, "that if you make a nobleman's spring legs as robust as his autumnal calves, you commit a monstrous impropriety, and make no allowance for the fatigues of the winter." "My good sir," the peer again remarks to the jeweller, "you forget that these matters are not as they used to be: formerly indeed the buckle was a sort of machine intended to keep on the shoe; but the case is now quite reversed, and the shoe is of no earthly use but to keep on the buckle." But there are at least two better insertions. "Men, not women, are riddles," shrewdly exclaims Berinthia in the second scene of the

[1] "The Provoked Wife," Act IV., Sc. IV.

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fourth act: that is Sheridan. And so is the conceit introduced shortly afterwards :—

> "That wife alone unsullied credit wins
> Whose virtues can atone her husband's sins.
> Thus while the man has other nymphs in view,
> It suits the woman to be doubly true."

Verbal changes occur in more than ten passages, some of them long; and there are still more and lengthier transposals, omissions, or excisions. It has not been noticed that the *dénouement* is simplified from that of a double to that of a single marriage, and that the whole finale is altered.

"I am a main bungler at a long story," says Squire Tunbelly, in lieu of epilogue. "Never fear, we will assist you, if the play is judged worth being repeated," replies Berinthia. It was so adjudged, notwithstanding some hisses, disappointment at a worn theme, and the accustomed volley of carping comments.[1] Ninety-nine performances of the play realised over £1,400 —no ill omen for the new management. None the less, Sheridan's closing words betray some uneasiness, and the "Trip to Scarborough" is a piece of patchwork in no sense worthy of his fame. He experimented on his public, while all the time his "School for Scandal" waited in concealment up his sleeve. The "Trip's" success was largely due to its cast, which comprised Mrs. Abington as Miss Hoyden, Miss Farren (then not twenty) as Berinthia, and, as Amanda, Mary Robinson, fresh from the Shakespearean parts so far above her, still, too, in the unsullied prime of that beauty which next year was to seal poor "Perdita's" doom. Through Sheridan, and Brereton, who brought her to him, she had been introduced to Garrick, who rehearsed Romeo to her Juliet, and himself sat in the orchestra to lend her encouragement. It is to her probably that Sheridan alludes when he says in a letter to Garrick, "I mean to be vastly civil to female talent of all sorts, and even

[1] Mrs. Robinson has told us how the play was hissed, how Sheridan from the wings forbade her to leave the stage until, at the Duke of Cumberland's instigation, the hisses were stopped by a curtsey which "electrified the house." Cf. Fitzgerald, Vol. I., p. 147.

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to the affectation of it where the person is very handsome, for the grace of Venus which passes all understanding atones for an abundance of frailty."[1] The men included all the names which were to renown and be renowned by the great comedy that established his fame. "A Trip to Scarborough" remained unprinted till 1781, the year which also saw the first edition of "The Critic." One curious detail may be added. Vanbrugh's widow—his second wife—had survived till the preceding year. She might have witnessed "The Rivals" and "The Duenna," and have met the young author whose star was now rising, much as her husband's had risen before Queen Anne ascended the throne, or he had built his own Haymarket theatre. She thus links the Restoration comedy to the Georgian, and Congreve's rival to "the second Congreve."

That second Congreve no longer inhabited Orchard Street. Money burned his pocket, and he removed to Great Queen Street, in the neighbourhood of Drury Lane and near the Freemasons' Tavern. There he stayed till shortly after his election to Parliament three years onwards.[2] He then transferred himself to the more fashionable Grosvenor Place, although he was still saddled, and for some years continued to be saddled, with the Queen Street mansion. Mrs. Sheridan disliked Grosvenor Place, and they next migrated to a large house at Heston, near Hounslow. By the close of 1781 they had taken another at Harrow; and in 1784, after a brief trial of Lower Brook Street, they installed themselves in Bruton Street, Berkeley Square, near Charles Fox in South Street, and not far from Devonshire House. There they long remained till, after the first Mrs. Sheridan's decease, her husband, in one stroke, leased a house in Grosvenor Street, a mansion at Isleworth, and a large

[1] Garrick Corr., cited by Mr. Fitzgerald, Vol. I., p. 130. For the circumstances of Sheridan's introduction of "Perdita" to Garrick, cf. *ibid.*, p. 147.

[2] Cf. the rare pamphlet of "An Epistle from Joseph Surface Esqre to Richard Brinsley Sheridan Esqre of Great Queen Street London. G. Kearsley, 1780." This is a satire on Sheridan's sub-chairmanship of the Westminster Reform-Committee. A note on p. 20 locates the house as next door but one to the Freemasons' Tavern.

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cottage at Wanstead. House-holding was his mania, but he was soon driven from place to place. Hertford Street succeeded, with the start of the new century; Jermyn Street for a space; George Street for a considerable time; and later on, Wimpole Street, Cavendish Square, George and Great Queen Streets again, and finally two houses in Savile Row, which complete a catalogue including other dwellings for short intervals, and a *villeggiatura* at Barnes. So much for Sheridan's homesteads.[1]

At Great Queen Street two plays, never produced, absorbed his energies. One of them, as yet untapped, was "The Statesman," which must belong to about this period, since its hero, "Sir Peter" Parade, could not well have followed on "Sir Peter" Teazle; the traditional names, moreover, of two subsidiary characters, "Fertile" and "Sprightly," would scarcely have been chosen in after years. Three scenes of one autograph act remain among the Sheridan papers, while a fragment dated 1782 exists in the British Museum Manuscripts.[2] The piece is a pure satire, and its plot is whimsical. Sir Peter, an old, fussy, self-made politician, retires to the country and atones for his failure in Parliament by making believe that all his servants are State functionaries, and all his affairs,

[1] This batch of habitats comes from many allusions in manuscript letters and allusions in books. That Sheridan was at Queen Street in 1777 is also shown by a letter in the Garrick Corr. Mrs. Sheridan's letters from Harrow in 1782 (LeFanu MSS.) mention Grosvenor Place and Queen Street. For Heston, cf. "The Court and City Register" for 1781. For Lower Brook Street the authority is a MS. statement by Sir R. Phillips. For Grosvenor Place in 1792, cf. Smyth's "Memoirs," p. 17. Mrs. Canning was with them at Wanstead. Sheridan's little daughter, who only lived eighteen months, was born not at Bruton Street, but at "Cromwell House" (cf. Eg. MS. 1975. Newspaper Cuttings), and Mrs. Sheridan heads a few of her later letters "Brompton." The other abodes are settled by Sheridan's letters and letters to him of various dates in the Sheridan MSS. The Isleworth house in 1792 was rented from Mrs. Keppel and belonged to Lacy. Smyth is wrong in saying it was Garrick's.

[2] Add. MS. 25939. Sheridan probably thought of using it in 1782. That the autograph in the Sheridan MSS. is the original appears by notes concerning the shortening of scenes, and that it was written earlier than 1782 is proved by an allusion to the American campaign. The handwriting is that of his youth.

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Government transactions. Here is "Fertile's" description of a petty placeman out of place. It points several of Sheridan's pet aversions:—

"His father carried a Greyhound at his button, and his mother kept a Coffee-House by the court of requests—so he was born a Politician. He served half an apprenticeship at an attorney's Desk, and then rose to be a Train-bearer's deputy to one of the Judges. By the Interest of an old Friend of his mother's, he soon after got into a clerkship in one of the public offices, whence by marrying a girl whose uncle had a relation whose first cousin had interest in a borough, he rose till he became a Commissioner of Hackney-coaches. Here he received a disappointment, [but] leaving a good fortune to his wife he forwarded himself to be knighted." And there are a few livelier Sheridan touches. When Sir Peter thinks of wedding his daughter to an Algerian consul, his wife rejoins, "What, you will have a vice-royal son-in-law!" and she scolds him roundly for neglecting his own affairs. How can he profess to judge of the American War when all his "geographical knowledge of a political kind never went beyond the measuring streets and lanes, and looking into the book of rates"? But he perseveres in his mock statesmanship, calling his butler his first minister, while even the visit of an alderman is heralded by the word "Dispatches." A footman, "Cruet," thus rises to the dignity of his post:—

"SIR P.: Well, Cruet, what news?
CRUET: A bill, please your worship.
SIR P.: A Bill! What, for a third reading?
CRUET: No, for oats, your worship.
SIR P.: Bring it up.
(Cruet brings up the bill with three bows.)
SIR P.: So. Refer it to the House Committee. But, Cruet, are we alone? Good Cruet, a word with you—Do you think we shall carry the question of the Board's vote on Diggory's Stone Quarry?"

The first of these excerpts confirms the story that Sheridan once dismissed a bill by saying, "Read for the third time—and passed." But in the main the dialogue is mediocre, and what

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vile songs he could scribble when he chose is shown by the following fragment allotted to "Sprightly":—

"The Life of a Soldier, 'tis true,
Is an Honor to boast,
The Ladies think praise is his due
And give him for a Toast.
When from war all valiant and bold
The Fair enquires his name,
Proud to hear his fine stories told
And admire his fame."

It is almost impossible to believe that the same man could have written the sprightly patter which he was often to dash off for the Devonshire circle; still less, have composed the love lyrics over which we have lingered.

The next piece to engage him was his fantastic drama, "The Foresters," developed from the germ of his older "Drama of Devils." "Wait till I bring out my 'Foresters,'" he would say in after years, and when Mrs. Jordan first enchanted the town, Mrs. Tickell told her sister that now surely Sheridan might be persuaded to "give us his 'Foresters.'" But, on the whole, this fragment (and it was longer when Moore saw it) is equally disappointing. It belongs to the taste of the moment, and is in no sense, as masterpieces are, coeval with all centuries. The high-flown apostrophes of Ossian swell its language, while two of its characters bear the Ossianic names of Morven and Colona. "The Foresters" is a sentimental journey that failed. It is chiefly notable as a proof of Sheridan's innate romanticism, and as evidencing his constant insistence on the rivalry in love of friends or brothers, which had been the long refrain of his youth; many years later he recurred to it in the shape of a pastoral composed for the Duchess of Devonshire.[1] On the fly-leaf of its manuscript he scrawled "*Vide* Petrarch's Laura," just as on one of the notebooks for "The School for Scandal" stands "See Petrarch for names";[2] and on it he further wrote a "Fiff with fond

[1] Cf. the allusion in one of the new series of letters to her in the Appendix to Vol. II.

[2] Moore has confused these two jottings. Cf. Vol. I., p. 320.

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regrets." A "fiff," in Mrs. Sheridan's parlance a small parcel, it abides, but something of its plot may be conjectured. Malvina, the long-lost daughter of Oscar, a stage-Arcadian, has been seized by forest outlaws, who play the same part as the "demons" of its predecessor. That operetta opened with its heroine's capture; this begins with a village festival on Malvina's return. She, too, like Reginilla, is beloved by some mysterious chieftain of banditti, "a mere unbearded boy," who, with chivalrous adoration, offers her a safe conduct home. He is not a disguised prince, like the hero of the other, but Malvina makes up for this lack of convention by owning a long-lost brother who would doubtless have brought in the element of light intrigue. He would probably have found his fate in Emma, a soubrette who exclaims, almost like Miss Snevellicci, "I will call the little prattler," when she is asked to fetch Malvina from her room.

All this resembles the Crummles melodrama, though some of its words are worthy of better things. Among Malvina's wooers are two brothers, Lubin and Nico, who harp on their sorrows in a vein that anticipates Sir William Gilbert's:—

"NICO: . . . Ever since we found your daughter cared for neither of us, we grew to care for one another. There is a fellowship in adversity that is consoling; and it is something to think that Lubin is as unfortunate as myself.

LUBIN: Yes, we are well matched. I think Malvina dislikes him if possible more than me, and that's a great comfort.

NICO: For my part I shall certainly hang myself, only I think that Lubin should swing first.

LUBIN: We often sit together and play such woeful tunes on our pipes that the very sheep are moved at it.

OSCAR: But why don't you rouse yourselves and since you can meet with no requital of your passion, return scorn for scorn?

NICO: Oh mercy, no—we find a great comfort in our sorrow—don't we, Lubin?

LUBIN: Yes, if I meet no crosses I shall be undone in another twelvemonth.—I let all go to wreck and ruin.

OSCAR: But suppose Malvina should be brought to give you encouragement?

NICO: Heaven forbid! that would spoil all.

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LUBIN: Truly I was almost assured within this fortnight that she was going to relax.

NICO: Ay, I shall never forget how alarmed we were at the appearance of a smile one day."[1]

One song,—

"Bold Foresters are we,
We are not for the world,"—

appears originally in prose, designed to be worked up into verse; but Moore gives another (missing from the manuscript), which recalls Sheridan's honeymoon, and will repay repetition:—

"We too each other's only pride,
Each other's bliss, each other's guide,
Far from the world's unhallowed noise,
From coarse delights and tainted joys,
Through wilds will roam—and deserts rude,
For, Love, thy home is solitude.

There shall no vain pretender be
To court thy smile and torture me,
No proud superior there be seen,
But Nature's voice shall hail thee, queen

With fond respect and tender awe,
I will receive thy gentle law,
Obey thy looks and serve thee still,
Prevent thy wish, forsee thy will,
And, added to a lover's care,
Be all that friends and parents are."[2]

Colin, too, a skinny swain, delivers a speech which again shows how much Falkland in "The Rivals" was Sheridan at Bath. Malvina's father tells him that he has never heard her prefer anyone else. "There's the torment of it," he answers. "Were I but once sure she loved another better, I should be content—at least she should not know but that I was content, for the bent of my love would be to make her happy. It is not of that

[1] Cited by Moore, Vol. I., pp. 322, 323. His version is longer than the Sheridan MS. shows in its present clipped state, but Moore omits the best part, the bit about hanging. This necessitates the next sentence being allotted to Nico instead of, as Moore gives it, to Lubin.

[2] Since penning the above the writer has found, and now owns, the original MS. of this song, which Moore forgot to return.

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jealous sort that I should hate to see her happy with another. Next to wishing her happy myself, my delight would be to see her so, and I could even regard the man that should make her so."[1] Had the play been finished, we might have gained a few graceful songs and some fanciful dialogue; but in leaving it a torso Sheridan recognised his limitations. With all his romantic feeling he could never create a fairy world. It is not always true that the poet is born, not made, for Alfieri "sculptured" himself into poesy, and in the process took infinite pains to be unhappy; but no statuary could ever have hewn a fantastic poet out of Sheridan.

Thus passed the months before "The School for Scandal" was perfected. Garrick warmly interested himself in the work, as it developed from two to five acts, and Colman also read it aloud to Burke, Reynolds, and Windham.[2] There was no lack of speculation as to its contents or of eagerness for its production. At this hour the whole world smiled on Sheridan, and stood on tiptoe to hear him. He was *the* dramatist and, even now, an embryo statesman. Society petted him, literary circles cheered his occasional pieces, and authors crowded round the new manager with their plays and prologues.[3]

Of his achievements in this department, specimens have been given. Another of 1779 may be added—the prologue to Hannah More's "Fatal Falsehood," a poor play that only ran three nights. Sheridan quizzes the toys and foibles of a "blue," and the rough draft for it contains no less than a hundred and fifty-five unrhymed, unrhythmical lines, most of them discarded, before the admired description of "Corilla's" toilet begins. It well exemplifies his uncouth and bewildering way of shaping verses. As we read, we gain the impression of walking through some littered lumber-room straight into a

[1] Moore has altered this passage at his own sweet will.

[2] Cf. "Early Life of Samuel Rogers," p. 307.

[3] Outside the Bohemians proper, General Burgoyne, the Della Cruscan Mrs. Cowley, the clerical O'Beirne (afterwards bishop), and Sir Bate Dudley (clergyman, bruiser, and editor of the *Morning Post*) were among the number.

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dainty boudoir. Satirising affectation, for instance, he treats us to the following disjointed farrago :—

> "A less substantial but more lovely cargo there
> Is the love—in voice of th' accomplished Fair.—
> Nor swayed by malice nor by surly zeal,—
> The rougher sciences are ne'er of use—
> Nor proud ambition nor uncouth policy—
> Nor slighted vows, nor solitary woe.—
> As in a Turtle with an eagle's wing.—
> As well may build a Chinese Temple on a base of stone.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Yet still some grand exceptions shall arise,
> To shew that Heaven has left the Power of being so.
>
> * * * * *"

yet such nonsense yields on a sudden to the smooth flow and balanced cadence of Pope :—

> "What motley cares Corilla's mind perplex,
> While maids and metaphors conspire to vex.
> In studious *déshabille* behold her sit
> A lettered gossip and a housewife wit,
> At once invoking, though for different views,
> Her Gods, her Cook, her Milliner and Muse.[1]
> Round her strewed room a frippery chaos lies,
> A chequered wreck of notable and wise.
> Bills, books, caps, couplets, combs in varied mass,
> Oppress the toilet and obscure the glass.
> Unfinished here an epigram is laid,
> And there a mantua-maker's bill unpaid.
> Here, new-born[2] plays foretaste the town's applause,
> There, dormant patterns fine for future gauze.
> A moral essay now is all her care,
> A satire next, and then[3] a bill of fare.
> A scene she now projects, and now a dish,
> Here[4] 'Act the First,' and there 'Remove with Fish.'

[1] The last four lines are restored to their finished state. In the draft they immediately precede the opening line, and the former couplet then runs :—

> "In studious disobill see Corilla sit,
> A lettered gossip and luxuriant wit."

[2] "Quickening" in the draft.

[3] "Next" in the draft.

[4] "Here's" in the draft.

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Now, while *this* eye in a fine frenzy rolls,
That soberly casts up a bill for coals.[1]
Black pins and daggers in one leaf she sticks,
And tears, and threads, and bowls, and thimbles mix."[2]

How congenial to him such toy-like ingenuity was, is shown by some stray lines, enclosed in a much previous letter to Garrick. They concern the sex's appreciation of poetasters :—

"In due proportion she rewards their toils,
Bows for a distich—for a stanza smiles;
Familiar nods an epigram attend;
An ode will almost rank you as a friend.
A softer name fond elegy bestows,
And nearest to her heart a sonnet flows."[3]

A still more finished instance is supplied by his prologue to the "Miniature Picture," a silly piece written by the ill-starred Lady Craven and privately acted some four years later. The minor wit, Jekyll, furnished an epilogue, and it was then said that the *frame* was much better than the *picture*.[4] In a spirited protest against the popularity of foreign products occurs a passage which shows how degenerate we have always thought ourselves :—

"Beaux, wits, applaud, as fashion should command,
And Misses laugh—to seem to understand.
So from each clime our soil may seem to gain
Manhood from Rome and sprightliness from Spain.
* * * *

[1] Omitted in the draft.

[2] Sheridan MSS. Another couplet seems to belong to these :—

"A crayon Cupid reddening into shape
Betrays her talents to design and scrape."

Cf. Moore, Vol. I., p. 337.

[3] Garrick Corr. (and cited by Fitzgerald, Vol. I., p. 130). At this time Garrick was with the Spencers at Althorp.

[4] A few lines from it, introduced long afterwards into the short prologue to "Pizarro," led Samuel Rogers into the error of supposing the whole "Pizarro" prologue to be a mere transcript from it, and he praises lines in the former that are absent from the latter. Cf. "Table Talk," p. 68. We shall have occasion shortly to quote the lines themselves.

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Exotic fopperies, hail! whose flattering smile
Supplants the sterner virtues of our isle.
Thus while with Chinese firs and Indian pines
Our nurseries swarm, the British oak declines."[1]

But his ingenuity could excel these trifles. Soon afterwards, the funeral of Brooks, the money-lending owner of the club which then ranked Sheridan as a member, gave him the opportunity for an ironical dirge unsurpassed in its department:

"Alas! that Brooks, returned to dust,
Should pay at length the debt that we,
Averse to parchment, mortgage, trust,
Shall pay when forced as well as he.

And die so poor too! He whose trade
Such profits cleared by draught and deed,
Though pigeons called him murmuring Brooks,
And dipped their bills in him at need.

At length his last conveyance see,
Each witness mournful as a brother,
To think that this world's mortgagee
Must suffer judgment in another!

Where no appeals to courts can rest,
Reversing a supreme decree;
But each decision stands expressed
A final precedent *in re*."[2]

He shines even more in the longer interludes of his epilogue to "The Rivals" and the poem presented to Mrs. Crewe with a copy of "The School for Scandal," where grace and pathos find ampler expression. Satire and sentiment were his forte—the forte of a suburban age—and in a projected epilogue for some play concerning female gamesters, with a side-glance, doubtless, at the Duchess of Devonshire and her sister, sentiment gets the upper hand:—

"The loveliest energies of Beauty's Life
Perversely wasted in the meanest strife.

[1] "Annual Register," 1780. The prologue closes with a most ingenious play on Burke's resolution for the diminution of "influence."

[2] Transcribed by Rev. J. Richardson in his "Recollections of the Last Half Century" (1855), Vol. II., p. 209. The variations in the metre should be noted in connection with what has already been said regarding the "Ode to Scandal."

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To see quick blushes and disordered sighs
Which Love disowns, nor even shame supplies,
Sighs that were once the breath of Love alone,
And starting tears which Pity dares not own."[1]

He delighted to versify the topsy-turvies of fashion and to epigrammatise the rococo peepshows around him. The following belongs to still another and later epilogue:—

"The Campus Martius of St. James' Street,
Where the beau's cavalry pace to and fro
Before they take the field in Rotten Row;
Where Brooks's Blues and Weltje's Light Dragoons
Dismount in files and ogle in platoons."[2]

This trifle is interesting for more than one reason. Some three decades later Sheridan spoke in the House of Commons against the destruction of the Row, and was thus said to have saved the spot of which he twice gave a picture. The first occasion will appear presently. The second was the piece in the prologue to "Pizarro," which Rogers praised as the work of "a great artist" and the happiest illustration of an actual scene:—

"Horsed in Cheapside, scarce yet the gayer spark
Achieves the Sunday triumph of the Park.
Scarce yet you see him dreading to be late,
Scour the New Road and dash through Grosvenor Gate;
Anxious—yet timorous too—his steed to show,
The hack Bucephalus of Rotten Row.
Careless he seems, yet, vigilantly sly,
Woos the stray glance of ladies passing by,
While his off-heel insidiously aside
Provokes the caper which it seems to chide."

[1] Sheridan MSS. Moore in his "Life," Vol. I., p. 336, supplies a previous portion:

"A night of fretful passion may consume
All that thou hast of beauty's gentle bloom,
And one distempered hour of sordid fear
Print on thy brow the wrinkles of a year."

There are variants also. For instance:—

"To see quick smiles and reddening blushes rise
Which mirth disowns nor merely shame supplies."

[2] Cf. Moore, Vol. I., p. 336. Weltje was, of course, the *chef* of the Prince of Wales. Moore misprints him "Weltze."

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And there is a link of literary succession in the phrase of "ogle in platoons." One of Disraeli's philippics against Peel contains a simile which likens the defaulting Squires to the barbarians on the banks of the Rhine, confronted by Charlemagne's army. Nothing could exceed the celerity of their conversion—"they were baptised in battalions and converted in platoons."

The second instance of a composition concerning Rotten Row hinges on to the famous comedy which the next chapter will examine. It is the source not only of Sir Benjamin Backbite's macaronic about ponies; but also of the "School's" hit at the fat "Mrs. Pursy," who puffs round the Ring "in the hottest noon in summer . . . on a little squat pony with her hair plaited up behind like a drummer's." Both these allusions condense an earlier rhymed letter by Sheridan from one woman of fashion to another. An excerpt may resuscitate the past, while it is not inapplicable to the present:—

"Then behind, all my hair is done up in a plait,
And so, like a cornet's bucked under my hat.
Then I mount on my palfrey as gay as a lark,
And followed by John take the *dust* in Hyde Park.[1]
In the way I am met by some smart macaroni
Who rides by my side on a little bay pony—
No sturdy Hibernian with shoulders so wide,
But as taper and slim as the ponies they ride.
Their legs are as slim and their shoulders no wider—
Dear sweet little creatures, both pony and rider.

But sometimes when hotter, I order my chaise
And manage, myself, both my two little greys.
Sure never were seen two such sweet little ponies,
Other horses are clowns, and these macaronies,
And to give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,
Their legs are so slim and their tails are so long.[2]

[1] Cf. in the Comedy "As Lady Betty Curricle was taking the ——"

[2] Cf. "SIR BENJAMIN:

"Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies,
Other horses are clowns and these macaronis:
To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,
Their legs are so slim and their tails are so long."

In Sheridan's own MS. prompt-book corrections "but" occurs in the

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In Kensington Gardens to stroll up and down
You know was the fashion before you left town;
The thing's well enough when allowance is made
For the size of the trees and the depth of the shade.

But the spread of their leaves such a shelter affords
To those noisy, impertinent creatures called birds,
Whose ridiculous chirruping ruins the scene,
Brings the country before me and gives me the spleen.

Yet though 'tis too rural—to come near the mark,
We all herd in *one* walk, and that nearest the Park,
There with ease we may see, as we pass by the wicket,
The chimneys of Knightsbridge and—footmen at cricket."

So runs this society patter, yet Sheridan's pert macaroni has preserved a quatrain of occasional verse through the centuries. That is what constantly marks off Sheridan's authorship, a miscellany of scraps *suprême'd*, as it were, into one superlative dish. The most superlative of his dishes, the dish that successive generations have enjoyed oftenest without satiety, is "The School for Scandal."

second line instead of "and," and "Nay" is added to the beginning of line the third.

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The Screen Scene in the 'School for Scandal,'
from an old illustration in the Dublin Edition of 1786.

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CHAPTER XI

"THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL"

"Tell me, ye prim adepts in Scandal's School,
Who rail by precept, and detract by rule,
Lives there no character, so tried, so known,
So decked with grace and so unlike your own,
That even you assist her fame to raise,
Approve by envy, and by silence praise?"

SHERIDAN, *of Mrs. Crewe in "A Portrait" sent to her with a manuscript of "The School for Scandal."*

". . . He has too good a character to be an honest fellow. Everybody speaks well of him. Pshaw! then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius or virtue."

Sir Oliver of Joseph Surface, "School for Scandal," Act II., Sc. III.

WHO would not wish to have been present on that memorable May the eighth in 1777, when "The School for Scandal" was born, and a house packed with every section of society welcomed an epoch-making play? Mrs. Crewe, the Devonshires, and the Lucans beamed from the boxes; while Garrick, who supplied the prologue and superintended the rehearsals, vied in enthusiasm with Colman, who was responsible for the after-verse. Dr. Johnson, too, can hardly have missed the *première* of a piece written by his new *protégé*, already perused by his best friends, and fraught with opportunities for his pet actress, Mrs. Abington. Nothing marred the triumph. Even the critics agreed, and their "unanimity," like that of the patriots in "The Critic," was wonderful. Here and there some carpers varied the monotony of acclaim. Wit-Jekyll murmured, "Why don't all these people leave off talking and let the play begin?" Scholar-Warton objected to chance characters disconnected with the plot, and, a little later, Cumberland, whose "Battle of Hastings" was then curdling Covent Garden,

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pinched his convulsed children with "There is nothing to laugh at, my little angels; keep still, you little dunces."[1] But by nine o'clock, when the screen fell, such were the thunders of applause that Reynolds, the journalist-companion of poor Becky Wells, ran for his life as he passed the theatre, in fear that the building would collapse. Sheridan remarked of Cumberland that his envy was gross ingratitude, since *he* had heard his tragedy and laughed at it heartily from beginning to end. All the world was pleased by "The School for Scandal," and for once posterity has ratified its verdict. Years afterwards, when Sheridan was asked why he had not produced his long-promised comedy on "Affectation," his interlocutor answered for him,—"You are afraid of the author of 'The School for Scandal.'"

The play narrowly escaped postponement, and the escape was double as well as narrow. Sheridan had to be pushed into final revision, till he scrawled his postscript of "Finished, thank God," to which Hopkins, the prompter, added "Amen."[2] This was in keeping with expectation, but the other mishap could scarcely have been foreseen. Petty politics intervened. A City election for the office of Chamberlain was in progress, and Wilkes was the anti-ministerial candidate. He was opposed by "vulture" Hopkins, not the prompter, but a merchant, who also lent money to minors. The Government, apprehensive that the satire on usury might favour Wilkes, brought influence to bear and stopped the license at the last moment. Sheridan, however, at once saw Lord Hertford, then Lord Chamberlain, who laughed at the affair and accorded the permission. In a reasoned speech against Pitt's Sedition Bills of 1795, Sheridan, demolishing an argument drawn from the

[1] Most of these instances are familiar. For Warton and Jekyll, cf. the "Early Life of S. Rogers," p. 304. Cumberland, scholar, talker, actor, civil servant, and Sir Fretful Plagiary, was Bentley's grandson.

[2] This postscript was at the end of the manuscript which Sir G. Chetwynd possessed. The Frampton Court manuscript is an earlier one. Merchant Hopkins is called "vulture" in "An Epistle from Joseph Surface" (1780). Prompter Hopkins's daughter Priscilla, known at Drury Lane as "Pop," acted Maria in "The School for Scandal" and became Mrs. John Kemble.

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regulation of theatres, recounted this episode, deprecated licenses except where decency might be concerned, and recorded his opinion that politics had no place on the stage.[1]

"The School for Scandal" is a phial into which Sheridan distilled the quintessence alike of himself and his time. Over none of his pieces did he bestow such discriminating pains. While he was yet at Bath, his sister has told us that its first phase had been thought out and only required to be written. But like Congreve's "Belinda," "it left off before it began."[2] It went through many phases ere, with Mrs. Crewe as inspirer,[3] it emerged from diffuseness and blossomed into perfection. Even then Sheridan perpetually mended a style which is an instrument of nicety and precision, and he told Wilkie the publisher that after nineteen years he had been unable to satisfy himself. This perpetual drilling of the words imparts a strain of monotony, and a regular tune can be heard in the set cadence of the sentences. But masterpieces are not made in a day. There is no better instance of improvisation elaborated into art, of the craftsmanship by which art is concealed, or of the terse simplicity into which subtle analysis can be condensed. The play is all champagne, as delicately and carefully made and matured, exhilarating even in the sound as it is uncorked from the smart bottle which promises choiceness, brisk with the same elegance, crisp with the same bouquet, and piquant with the same sparkle.

The successive stages through which the comedy passed will be treated afterwards; nor must some transferences both from parts of itself and from a few outside recollections be omitted. Molière's oft-misquoted sentence comes here to our aid: "I *re*-capture my good," he said, "where I find it": "*Je reprens mon bien où je le trouve.*" Let us at once examine

[1] Speech of December 3, 1795. Speeches, Vol. III., p. 19. Mr. Fraser Rae first called attention to this fact (Vol. I., p. 320), but he gave the wrong year (1793) and the wrong page (p. 17).

[2] "Old Bachelor," Act IV., Sc. VIII.

[3] "Thee my inspirer and my model Crewe." "A Portrait" sent to her by the author with a MS. of the play.

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the play itself and presume—as is the case—that Sheridan chiefly plagiarised from nature.

The most obvious fact about "The School for Scandal" is its life and longevity. No old-English comedy since Shakespeare has worn so well. Whether we reckon it to be a second-rate comedy of the first class, or (as M. Sarcey has done) a first-rate comedy of the second class, or (as some may be allowed to think) a first-rate comedy in the strict sense of that word, nothing will explain its vital power away. This is not due merely to its blaze of wit, still less to its local colour. Something elemental must reside in a work that lasts in differing countries and centuries with undimmed lustre, and persists both as literature and on the stage. Congreve's wit has not so persevered, though there is a freshness about it even when it languishes in his hot-house world. The reason is obvious. Congreve is a spectator, he stands aloof from his own creations, arranges, criticises, disposes, eyes them like a connoisseur. He is the arbiter of superb elegance, inaccessible to the vulgar; and his wit is an icicle—in his one lurid comedy, "The Double Dealer," an iceberg. On neither side can Sheridan approach him. He was no such intellectual Petronius. He is less classical, less reflective, less chastened. Foible's "all that is not kissed away" and "Your picture must sit for *you*, madam," eclipse Sheridan's refinements.[1] And he is far less intense. The tragedy of Lady Touchwood is quite beyond him, nor could his wit ever have condensed passion into the thrill of Belmour's "Eternity was in that moment,"[2] any more than he could have penned Wycherley's lighter line of "love, the life of life."[3] But Sheridan's wit is even more salient and infinitely more joyous. The sunshine dances across its facets, and the play of human nature lies, as Sir Henry Irving insisted, at the root of his charm. Sheridan never keeps his characters at a distance; he laughs with and at them. While Congreve sits in state with crown and sceptre, Sheridan jests with his merry

[1] "Way of the World," Act III., Sc. V.
[2] "Old Bachelor," Act IV., Sc. VII.
[3] "Country Wife," Act IV., Sc. I.

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court around him; while Congreve never errs, Sheridan heightens his effects by mistakes. Congreve is infallible, but Sheridan is rebellious—the protestant of polished comedy. Compared with Goldsmith, Sheridan is cold; compared with Congreve, he is warm and sociable. His sympathy, no doubt, springs more from the head than the heart; but it is sympathy, and a sympathy which Congreve lacks. The "School" is more than a "Congreve rocket."

It is customary to think of it merely as a comedy of wit with conventional types for its mouthpiece, as a young man's play, drawn more from books than from men. The assumption is easy, but a little study will soon disprove it. True, its theme is ancient, older than civilisation, as old, indeed, as the sixty-fourth psalm, while the contrasted brothers hark back to Jacob and Esau. Nor, as an episode, was it new to the stage. A strain of scandal enters into all the early comedies where coxcombs are prominent, for "raillery," says Congreve, is the best qualification in a woman's man." Scandalmongering intersperses and enlivens his "Old Bachelor," "Way of the World," and "Double Dealer,"—a play which afforded old Sheridan a favourite part and which his son revived at Drury Lane. Clarissa in Vanbrugh's "Confederacy," Olivia in Wycherley's "Plain Dealer," carry on the tradition of feminine slander. Slander occurs in Molière's "Misanthrope" and prompted a famous passage in Beaumarchais' "Figaro," "The School for Scandal's" junior by seven years. But Sheridan was the first to make scandal the sustained motive of a complete play. The venom had poisoned his youth, and he had long resolved—"like a young Don Quixote," wrote Garrick—to annihilate "this hydra."[1] Scandal creeps along every turn of the road. The scandalous college creates Lady Teazle's flirtations and Sir Peter's jealousy. The dread of it well-

[1] "Proud of your smiles once lavishly bestowed,
Again our young Don Quixote takes the road;
To show his gratitude he draws his pen
And seeks this hydra Scandal in his den."
Garrick's Prologue to "The School for Scandal."

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nigh seduces its licentiate from her frivolous innocence when she is taught to "sin in her own defence and part with her virtue to preserve her reputation." And every variety of scandal is presented, from its butterfly to its wasp, from the votaries, like Mrs. Candour, who kill time and reputations at once, to the villains who trade on it,—one out of revenge, another from cunning, and a third for livelihood.[1] The very sentence which shocked the Parisian taste by adding a wish for widowhood to Lady Teazle's bickerings with her husband—a sentence at first erased by Sheridan[2]—is in keeping with the situation. It betokens the wreck of all finer feeling by assassins who would fain strip their victim, "though he *is* your brother, and the light sacrifice of her better self to her desire to shine in repartee." How changed her voice sounds when the awakening comes, and Joseph exclaims, "The woman is mad": "No, sir, she has recovered her senses, and your own arts have furnished her with the means. Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me, but the tenderness you expressed for me when you could not think I was a witness to it, has so penetrated to my heart that had I left this place without the shame of this discovery, my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude." To such soft spots as these—and there are others,—to the lights and shades of character around them, our eyes are blinded by the glare of uniform wit; and this Sheridan recognised as being the main fault of the whole. But if its leading persons be analysed it will be found that they are by no means the figure-heads of melodrama.

Joseph Surface is not the conventional stage hypocrite, nor is he a Tartuffe, the sole monster in the gallery of Molière. Tartuffe is a red-faced, sanctimonious ruffian, cowing a superstitious

[1] This specialisation of scandalmongers is noticed by Lamb, who calls Crabtree the wasp, and Backbite the butterfly, and, differently, by Delille, who in his contemporary French translation distinguishes the characters in his *dramatis personæ*, Lady Mordante ("Sneerwell"), "femme dangereuse"; Madame Candeur, "médisante impitoyable"; Serpent, "intrigant"; Sauvageon ("Crabtree"), "bavard," and Sir Benjamin Diapre ("Backbite"), "manière de bel esprit."

[2] By his own hand in a very early prompt-book. Sheridan MSS.

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household beyond the bounds either of his unction or of their credulity. Such was not Sheridan's view or experience of humbugs *in excelsis*. Tartuffe is a savage, Surface is the Iago of comedy, a polished schemer with a persuasive tongue. But he is more than plausible. As M. Taine has pointed out, he is sad and tender to excess, "with an air serious and noble." "He lays his hand on his heart, tears are in his eyes, and a flood of fine sentences on his lips, while he smirches his brother's good name and attempts the honour of his neighbour's wife." The rhetoric that conveys his assumed sentimentality has grown into a habit. It has become almost natural, and at the very opening he airs it on the confederate who is obliged to remind him that he is "among friends." Tartuffe is *farouche* and resembles the vulgar fiend of a mystery-play, but the insinuating Joseph is more like a comic version of Milton's Belial. Molière's pietist, like Dickens's Chadband, is satirised only from the outside; Sheridan's casuist is a far subtler conception. Tartuffe, indeed, is the Puritan, Joseph Surface the Jesuit of hypocrisy.

And there is another *trait* which has been overlooked. What Joseph really worships is reputation. He worships it more than the pleasure which it veils, and he worships it so much that he loses sight of character altogether; indeed, he regrets that his character is so good that "he doubts he will be exposed at last." To be thought good is his ideal, but he is unable to be so, and so his spurious respectability goes to pieces through the only bit of unmixed nature about him, his real infatuation for Lady Teazle. It is this which dupes him into remaining Lady Sneerwell's unwitting tool, though he hoodwinks even her regarding Lady Teazle, and Lady Teazle, in the matter of Maria. He sets out to win Maria's fortune, meets with the other on the road, and ends by a self-betrayal. His love of appearances becomes his Nemesis, and so true is he to life that Madame de Genlis was at once named "Josephine Surface." His "sentiments" bear the same relation to sentiment that coxcombry does to breeding, or flirtation to love. Demure and smooth, he clings to them even when the game is up, and the soft effrontery of his farewell is inimitable: "Sir, I am so con-

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founded to find that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of suborning Mr. Snake in this manner, to impose on us all, that I know not what to say. However, lest her revengeful spirit should prompt her to injure my brother, I *had* certainly better follow her directly. For the man who attempts ——."[1]

I have already said that Joseph is a hypocrite in a sentimental suit. The real sentimentalist is Charles Surface—Sheridan, Tom Jones, who you will, at a period when generosity and good intentions were called Benevolence, and Prudence "clinging to the green suckers of youth" like "ivy round a sapling" was held to spoil "the growth of the tree." Saws like "Boys will be boys" and "the reformed rake" would seem to offer but scant pasturage for sentimentalism, but Charles's sentimentality is patent. It colours his affection for the portrait of "that ill-looking little fellow over the settee"; it rings in his parting words ". . . You shall be my monitor—my gentle guide—Ah! can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?"[2] It is the ground for his acquisition of the family house from Joseph. It leavens the whole crop of his wild oats, and backs all his easy virtue and loose morality. So long as a young man does nothing "false or mean," despises the money which he dissipates, lavishes alms on distress, and makes no sham professions, he is estimable, and estimable because these qualities hold the seeds of something better. Such is Charles Surface in a play that was originally sentimental, and such is Sheridan's ideal of a good fellow.[3] No one for a moment supposes that after marriage Charles will drop his motto of "Damn your economy" any more than that Joseph after his detection will cease to be taunted with "Damn your

[1] It should be added that the hiatus is an after-thought. It has already been pointed out that some of Joseph's features were probably suggested both by Charles Sheridan and by Mathews.

[2] This sentence stood originally, "Ah! can I wander—and those eyes my cynosure!" And after this was erased Sheridan put "pilot" for "guide" and erased it again.

[3] Wycherley first started the "good fellow" in his "Country Wife," where Horner says it is hard "to be a good fellow, a good friend, and a lover of money" (Act I., Sc. I.).

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sentiments." Indeed, it would be amusing to sketch a sequel to the plot. All the characters but the retired Sir Oliver are idlers, and none of them would stoop to any fixed occupation. But before the nabob's departure he would probably grow disgusted with Charles also and bequeath his fortune to Rowley, the benevolent steward who has nothing to do but talk, and is impossible save in the Latin comedy. Lady Teazle, as a young widow, would make an imprudent match, and become a shrew with scolding regrets for her sainted Peter. Sir Benjamin might pursue Maria, who would one day weary of debts, duns, and late home-comings, even if Charles grew, as he forecasted, "rich and splenetic, all in good time." And Snake would surely hit on a means of requiting Lady Sneerwell, who might turn Methodist, and would lead Joseph a terrible life. Cant would revenge itself all round.

If Joseph cants dishonestly from worship of the world's opinion, Charles also cants honestly in his airy bravado. The one pretends to virtue, the other—

> "Compounds for sins he has a mind to
> By damning those he's not inclined to."

In one point, however, the critics have wronged the libertine. The man who has "often given grounds of uneasiness" to so many "worthy men" has been called heartless for his bewildered irony when the screen falls. But the circumstances warrant it. Not only is Charles puzzled, but he has long been traduced by every actor in that memorable scene. At that moment he believes that his guardian has played eavesdropper, and he knows that his brother is a traitor contriving his ruin. Lady Teazle stands abashed, the damning evidence of what he is unwilling to suspect. Is it cruel in him then to burst out and mock the conspirators ere he makes his exit? "Egad, you all seem to have been diverting yourselves here at hide and seek, and I don't see who is out of the secret. Shall I beg your ladyship to inform me? Not a word!—Brother, will *you* be pleased to explain this matter?—What! is Morality dumb too?—Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so *now!*

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All mute!—Well—though *I* can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another, so I will leave you to yourselves. Brother, I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man grounds for so much uneasiness. Sir Peter! There's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment!"[1] Surely Charles is justified. And for Joseph too one plea may be urged. Charles's vaguely-hinted gallantries lurk wholly in the background, while of Joseph's prim profligacy we hear no end. This is natural enough, because Charles consorts with a set of sporting friends who are unlikely to malign him, and he only frequents the scandalous common room for a glimpse of Maria. But though this touch is of nature, it is also of art. It heightens the antithesis between the two characters and our sympathy with the younger. Let Joseph take the benefit of our illusion. We should be less shocked at him if we were more shocked at Charles.

Lady Teazle, again, is no mere type of a girl yoked to ridiculous age like the tame Lady Townley in Colman's best comedy, "The Provoked Husband." Marrying to escape her home boredom, she succumbs to the lure of fashion. All along fashion is her temptress, and in the original draft "Jenny" dwells on the fashionableness even of her father.[2] To be thought in the mode, she joins the crew of caballers, though there is no malice in her impulsive composition.[3] Wit, however, does enter into it, and in the war of tongues she holds her own with the best of them, as the child of nature usually does, and as Sheridan emphasised by a jotting in an early note-book for the play. "Lady Teazle," he writes, "has wit, a great virtue"—"tie up the knocker of her tongue," while he adds that "Milady" should wear "clothes

[1] The words are italicised as Sheridan italicised them in the prompt-books with his own hand, and as they appear in an early MS. version.

[2] Sheridan MSS. "Yet my mother's husband was no monster to me, but I believe my father must have been a man of quality." She was intended to be the *step-daughter* of a country squire. There is a passage (also erased) in Act III., Sc. I., which discloses her name: "You shall be plain Peter, and call me *Jenny*."

[3] ". . . When I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humour" (Act I., Sc. II.).

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Mrs. ABINGTON,
(the original impersonator of Lady Teazle)
from an old engraving
after the portrait by Cosway.

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with the gloss on."[1] She is a country girl striving to be a lady of quality, and as such she should be acted.[2] Fashion makes her blurt out heartless repartees which she regrets. Fashion motives her cold coquetries. To fashion, her old bachelor of a husband bars the way. She listens to Joseph because a cicisbeo is as indispensable to the *ton* as the pair of "white cats" to her carriage and the "bags and bouquets" to her footmen. And it is only when accident saves her from the brink of catastrophe that she realises how nearly all her light flutter has verged on ruin. Her country upbringing stands her in good stead when the crisis comes, and she shames Joseph by asking, in the finest line of the play, whether "honour" is not best left out of his argument. This is all Sheridan's own, and the blend in her of art and artlessness, of village hoyden and fine lady, imparts a certain smart simplicity, absent from the Mrs. Pinchwell of Wycherley's "Country Wife"—that shy *ingénue* with a despicable husband. She too longs for the town, but she covets its pleasures and has no pretensions to society; she is farcical—a mere marionette in an interlude of intrigue. Lady Teazle, on the other hand, is not *intrigante* at all. Her archness and freshness are inexhaustible, and in the whole range of comedy there is not a more delightful dialogue than hers with her husband when they "will never, never differ again." She is queen of the frolic stage, winsome even in disgrace. Her very lapses give the impression of scrapes, and her penitence is an April shower. There is no finality about her.[3] Her quick tongue and quicker moods play on the monotony

[1] Sheridan MS. (at Frampton Court). "The gloss on" is a phrase which gave him trouble in a part of the play. It originally stood "with the gloss," and "on" was added in the MS. copy which he presented to Mrs. Crewe. Cf. Moore's "Life," Vol. I., p. 247.

[2] Mrs. Abington acted her as the fine lady, Mrs. Jordan as the romp. It has been reserved for Miss Marie Löhr to impersonate the union of artlessness and of art.

[3] In the play we believe her reformation to be sincere. Colman spoiled this effect by his maladroit epilogue:—

"I who was late so volatile and gay,
Like a trade-wind must now blow all one way,

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of a husband whom they redeem from being a lay figure, and, indeed, sometimes render pathetic.

Sir Peter is a gentleman, every inch of him, and his first thought when he emerges from his hiding-place is to exculpate Joseph. His fondness is not that of a dotard, nor is he the mere *citoyen bafoué* of ancient comedy. He is fifty—the equivalent of sixty now—but though old enough to be her father, he is not bewitched by beauty alone. She tantalises him into admiration. "Though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarrelling with her," he soliloquises; "and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague me." Their battledore and shuttlecock interchange—point on point, as was Sheridan's habit—is not limited to repartee; the picture of her country life—a picture that smells of lavender—is shared between them. Lady Teazle is no bad emblem of the play itself, so elaborate as to seem artificial yet, really and underneath, naïve—a rustic romp schooled to drop a court curtsey; a piece of eglantine, trained and transplanted into a *parterre*. And their blemishes are the same. The comedy is always just going to touch us and then laughing our emotions away. It plays with the passions which it introduces, and sometimes deafens their appeal by the salvo of its wit. This is owing to its mixed origin, for it started as a sentimental melodrama with witty interludes, while it ended by almost eliminating the part of Maria. None the less it remains a truly human document.

Such lights and shades mitigate the metallic gleam of the play's enamel, and the whole drama is more flexible than it seems—a fresh cause for its permanence. More technical qualities also assist its unfading freshness. Sheridan is a complete

> Bend all my cares, my studies and my vows
> To one dull, rusty weather-cock—my spouse.
> * * * *
> And say, ye fair, was ever lively wife,
> Born with a genius for the highest life,
> Like me untimely blasted in her bloom,
> Like me condemned to such a dismal doom?"

and so forth. But Colman was then a dictator who had to be humoured.

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master of stage illusion. However improbable some of the situations, as, for instance, the auction-scene and the constant encounters at each other's houses of persons the least likely to meet there; however dazzling the sameness of the wit, a sameness caused by the transference of phrases in the process of composition, and absent, be it noted, from the homely characters of Rowley and Sir Oliver; however inadequate some of the motives, the characterisation is natural as we see it represented. It has often been said (and Cumberland said so at the time) that the hurried exit of Joseph when he leaves Charles alone with Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle in ambush, is a clumsy contrivance. But it does not seem so when the play is acted, nor is it really a stage awkwardness. Lady Sneerwell is announced, and her presence would have been fatal. Instead of finding some excuse to dismiss her—which she would probably have overridden—Joseph loses his head, and takes the chance of a moment's absence. Moreover, had Lady Sneerwell walked up, the telling scenes of the next act, with their stultification of rumour, would have been useless, and we should have missed their foil to the earlier developments of malice. It has been objected that everyone talks, and little happens. But we do not perceive this as we listen. Not only does the subject necessitate the dialogue, but the dialogue *is* the plot—a plot of idea which leads up wonderfully to the three crowning episodes. Sheridan was an adept at stage construction. There are few playwrights who, after the auction and screen scenes, would have ventured on a triple anti-climax—the babble about the supposed duel, the buffeting of Stanley-Premium-Surface, and the final unmasking of "Snake." Yet, so adapted are these to the *finale*, so deftly and humorously handled, that they are not recognisable as anti-climaxes at all. Again, Charles's devotion to Maria is only hinted, though the pair was to have played a much larger part, and Sheridan had meant to put long love-passages in their mouths. These, however, would have been excrescences, and the play is far more artistic as it stands. Nor is the drama's tessellation (manifest when we trace its pieces) perceptible in its completed

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form. Its character, phases and atmosphere seem harmonious, and call up a little world of their own. Everyone moves and breathes and has his being, and the inconsistencies appear consistent. To the writer's mind the real blunders of construction are two. Joseph ought never to reappear after the screen-scene, which is his true notice to quit, and Lady Sneerwell's tirades at the finish should have been spared. They belong to the different play with which Sheridan started. They smack of false tragedy and jar on the reconciliations of the happy ending.

And here a fresh sign of originality is to be found. Sheridan respected the confines of Comedy, disregarded in his day by maudlin pedants, as it has been invaded in ours by a morbid psychology. We have only to read Murphy's sentiments, Colman's fun, and Cumberland's sermons, to feel how flat or torpid comedy had become, and to see that Thalia was almost discrowned. Sheridan restored her reign. He knew that his audience wanted to be amused, and he amused them right royally. His "artificial" Eldorado of drawing-room wit should only be criticised by an age destitute of bores, dullards, and superior persons.

For in truth the sphere of comedy prescribes its limits. Comedy deals with human wilfulness enveloped in humour and expressed by wit. Intrigue and conversation form its pivots, and in this sense it must always be "artificial," for it mirrors an artificial civilisation. Tragedy, on the other hand, is "natural." It presents a conflict of wills, it is concerned with the passions and their protest against every film of convention. Much has been talked of the "comedy of manners," which has been dignified into a distinct species. But the phase itself is wholly artificial. A comedy portraying the manners of its age only becomes one of "manners" when that age has vanished. A "comedy of manners" denotes deceased conventions. It is archaic—a museum-piece, and the "School" seemed no more a "comedy of manners" when it appeared, than its costumes seemed "picturesque" to contemporary eyes. It depicted the ways of its own generation, it did not reproduce the follies of the past.

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Charles Lamb has used "artificial" in another sense. The charming essay, perpetuating his delight in "The School for Scandal" and its first actors, mapped out the counties of Comedy-land, and discriminated between the "artificial" and the "sentimental." Indeed, the sole fault that he finds with Sheridan's masterpiece is that it is a hybrid between the two. Here with all deference we part company with Lamb. In one sense he is justified, for Sheridan joined wit to sentiment. But the "artificial" is no mere province of comedy; it is its kingdom, its essence, and this applies even more when it expresses sentiment than when it represents manners. Sheridan's is a comedy of cities, for his was a town-bred talent; but country-comedy, too, if it is to be strictly comic, must be equally "artificial." There are romantic dramas which can only be styled comedies by virtue of their happy ending. And there are fantasies of Arcadia, or Fairyland, like "As You Like It" or "A Midsummer Night's Dream," which are miscalled comedies. Yet even these create the conventions round which they revolve, and they are wholly passionless. Sheridan's comedy is unfantastic; it is *genre* comedy of the drawing-room, and, according to Sheridan himself, the true sphere of the comic muse is "the follies and foibles of society."[1] That it should "bestride the world like a Colossus" is out of all question. It stays in its little urban corner. It has no claim to that universal element which, from age to age, expands and grows under ever-fresh interpretation. Its voice does not vibrate, like some of Molière and most of Shakespeare; rather its compass is small, but clear, hard, resonant, compact. No mere comedy can be world-embracing, and something of the surface must always adhere to it. Even "Much Ado About Nothing," the best of Shakespeare's pure comedies, does not pretend to plumb the depths, and Falstaff's humour is only profound because it is in contact with far deeper elements. But the best comedies are world-wide, even if they cannot be world-embracing. The range of "The School for Scandal" is narrow and has no affinity to the laughter of the spheres. But it presents

[1] Cf. "The Critic," Act I., Sc. I.

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universal characters and appeals to universal experience. Its wit is fresh, imbued with colour, exhaling perfume, and bedewed with life—the life, and scent, and colour of gay flowers, as distinguished from dead and savourless *immortelles*. The form of its presentation, the perspective of its view, are models, and it remains what such comedies should strive to be, a pointed epigram on life.

The evolution of "The School for Scandal," from the single scene penned by Sheridan after his second duel, to the play's ultimate form, can be traced with certainty but not with completeness. We are ignorant how he lit on the auction and screen scenes, the former of which suggested a political satire on the price of politicians, while the latter was praised by Cumberland himself.[1] We do not know how he first came to weld two subsequent fragments together, or what suggested the final title. But we do know that the idea came to him at Bath, that the origin of the whole was what would now be called a sentimental melodrama, that quite commonplace characters gradually became individualised, that the points were perpetually worked up and varied, and that even while the comedy was being rehearsed this process of elaboration continued. A close study of the autograph manuscript at Frampton Court, of the rough notes for it in four copy-books, of the corrections in Sheridan's hand on several prompt-books, of contemporary transcripts in another handwriting, and of variations in early issues, enables us to decide its "states" as we can decide the states of a mezzotint.[2]

[1] The auction-scene gave rise to "Ways and Means, or A Sale of the L——s S——l and T——l by R——l P——n. London, 1782."

[2] The manuscript play, the notes for it, and the prompt-books annotated by Sheridan are among the Sheridan MSS. A contemporary manuscript in another hand belongs to the writer. It is in a very early "state," as the text proves. It is dated 1777 and is probably one of those which Sheridan presented to his friends before 1778, when Ewing's Irish edition appeared. A still earlier transcript of the fourth act, showing many divergences from the received text, is also in the writer's possession. Both the writer's complete manuscript and one at least of the Sheridan prompt-books contain Sheridan's marks of emphasis, which are invaluable aids to a

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The first *brouillon* (unless the "Ode to Scandal" be reckoned as a foretaste) is a sheet of dialogue for "The Slanderers—*A Pump-Room Scene*," which includes the germ of the gossip about the twins, and a forecast of the complexion that "comes and goes."[1] This was succeeded by short scenes for two unnamed plays, the one satirising an ill-assorted match, the other a melodramatic comedy of jealousy and intrigue. These seem to have been worked at simultaneously and as alternatives. The first or Teazle fragment may have been suggested by Long's affair with Miss Linley, for the old widower who weds the country girl is called "Solomon" Teazle, like Foote's "Solomon" Flint in "The Maid of Bath." Crabbed age and youth cannot live together. Merchant Solomon is a *bourgeois* Sir Peter, and the one name soon yields to the other. His rage at the "bags and bouquets for footmen" and his description of his wife's country breeding tally with their familiar counterparts.[2] So does her

proper performance. Another of these manuscripts was sold a few years ago by auction, but the writer does not know what "state" the version represents. Through the kindness of Mr. Charles Letts, he has also inspected another early prompt-book. A manuscript, formerly in Mr. A. Daly's possession, may perhaps belong to this category also. The various Dublin editions differ somewhat from the established version. The text of Mr. Brander Matthews's admirable edition is taken from the Frampton Court manuscript which the writer has collated with the sources above detailed. Mr. Fitzgerald states that the first autograph manuscript (presumably that which Sheridan and the prompter undersigned) was in possession of Sir G. Chetwynd; but that the autograph, now at Frampton, was considered the first draft appears from Moore's record in his "Journal" (Vol. IV., p. 245) that he showed Corry, in 1824, Sheridan's manuscript for "The School for Scandal," "which, being an enthusiast in the drama, he was delighted with." A complete Bibliography of the "School" will be found at the end of our second volume.

[1] Moore, Vol. I., pp. 210, 211. "The most intrepid blush; I've known her complexion stand fire for an hour together." This was partly used in "St. Patrick's Day." Among further jottings we find "To be sure they do say"; "I hate to repeat what I hear"; "Lud, ma'am, the match is certainly broke—no creature knows the cause—some say a flaw in the lady's character and others in the gentleman's fortune."

[2] There are slight differences. The received version runs, "Then you sat in a room hung round with fruit and worsted of your own working. Your amusements were to play country dances on an old spinet to your

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desire for spring all the year round, and that "roses grew under our feet."[1] "Mrs." is far more heartless than "Lady" Teazle, whose heart is infected by her vanity. She only wants her husband to live because he refuses to make a settlement. She taunts him with his years and asks if he thinks age "catching." She mocks his courtship when he "fatigued his stiff face with an eternal grin," and even "committed poetry." She compares him to "a billet-doux engrossed on buckram."[2]

The first, then, of these rough sketches is notable as a study for the Teazles, though it also furnished other main persons of the drama. The second, however, is the real nucleus of the story and the embryo of many of its epigrams. Its outline appears in an early note-book now at Frampton Court. "Emma" or "Maria" (for she stands under both names) is here the orphaned niece and dependant of Lady Sneerwell, a rich young widow envenomed by slander into being herself a slanderer, just as she figures in the full-fledged play. She hides a passion for Sir Charles Clerimont, also called "Florival," and tries to break off the attachment between him and Maria by pretending to dote on Sir Benjamin Backbite (the villain of this piece) and getting the girl to write love-letters for her to that precursor of Joseph Surface. Thus Clerimont, chivalry embodied—whom indeed the caballers mock as an observer of the Golden Rule[3]—is duped into imagining his sweetheart faithless, while Backbite makes love at the same moment to both aunt and niece. The screen and auction scenes are both

father while he went to sleep after a fox-chase—to read Tillotson's sermons to your Aunt Deborah." But in the earlier text the "white cats" of her equipage were "white dogs," and there was no "docked coach-horse."

[1] "One's feet" in the fragment.

[2] Even when a single story had replaced the two crayons, Sheridan continued to tone down the roughness of the wrangling couple. He expunged the following: "Sir P.: And I was a madman to marry you, and I believe you capable of everything that's bad."

[3] Sir B. Backbite: "This Clerimont is to be sure the drollest mortal. He is one of your moral fellows who does unto others as he would they should do unto him." To which Lady Sneerwell rejoins, "Yet he is sometimes entertaining."

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missing, and a conventional climax at the end of the second act was to have closed the play. The actual *dénouement* is undefined, but a jotting given by Moore, and a scrap from an unfinished scenario show that the *finale* was to turn on an intercepted letter and a cupboard incident where Backbite, meeting the aunt in the dark, locks her up in mistake for the niece, who promptly goes into stage-hysterics.[1] All this is hazy enough, but such was clearly the vague prelude to Lady Teazle behind the screen. Nor was it the only one. Sheridan played with this notion in his commonplace books. A still earlier jotting, on a page which also contains political notes, introduces a Lady Isabella Aircastle (apparently Lady Teazle's predecessor), who appoints an interview with her lover, and so far as can be gathered hides somewhere to escape detection.[2] For Emma (otherwise "Maria"), a much longer and more sentimental part was designed than proved feasible afterwards, when her lover was changed from a romantic paragon into a good-hearted spendthrift.[3] The "Clerimont" play—one of love and hate—teemed with sentiment and situation. How melodramatic it was may be seen by one of Lady Sneerwell's apostrophes to

[1] The first of these jottings runs: "A man making love to aunt and niece—meeting wrong in the dark—someone coming—locks up the aunt thinking it to be the niece." That Sheridan wished to make up the whole less stagey is shown by a memorandum "not to drop the letter" but to "take it from the maid." From this we gather that the usual device of a letter dropped by mistake formed part of the *finale*. An earlier jotting, too, runs: "I have received an anonymous letter." The scenario fragments run as follows: "Act 2, Sc. 1. All.—2. Lady Sneerwell, Emma, Florival—fits—maid—all—Feint to expose"; "Emma fainting and sobbing—both—'Don't expose me'—enter maid—All come on with sa(u)lts and smelling-bottle." Sheridan has scribbled at the side, "Florival has struck her jealous of the chamber-maid." This refers, presumably, to Lady Sneerwell.

[2] The passage is somewhat enigmatical: "Her name is Lady Isabella Aircastle—Isabella, come forth—Harriet promises Lady Sneerwell not to let Maria see her, but hearing her brother's voice, comes out and runs in again." Another passage also uses the name of "Aircastle": "It was but just now I heard that Miss Aircastle had gone off with Captain Saunders."

[3] We shall see that even when the play approached completion, much more was made of Maria than was allowed to remain. In the "Clerimont" play even Lady Sneerwell's language was more sentimental.

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"Emma." "Go!" she cries, "forget the affection I have showed you, forget that I have been a mother to you whom I found an orphan. Go! Break through all the ties of gratitude, and expose me to the world's derision, to avoid one sullen hour from a moody lover." Traces yet remain in the comedy as it stands of the large part that Lady Sneerwell was to have played, and of her vindictive fury. The words of her final exit are an example.

The "School" had assumed definite shape in this "Clerimont" crayon when the sketch of the Teazles was grafted on to it. The fusion of the two initiated the play in earnest. Clerimont vanished not only in name, but in the changed type of his replacer. Backbite ceased to be the villain and relapsed into a macaroni. The Teazles were incorporated, and with them came the contrasted brothers, who, in the "Teazle" fragment, were known successively as "Plausibles," "Pliants," and "Pliables." At first it was the younger who played the hypocrite under the name of "Tom," while the elder was entitled "Frank," ere they both emerged as the full-blown Charles and Joseph Surface; even then the villain was for some time denominated "Young Surface."[1] As for the name itself, Sheridan took it, as we have seen, from "Mrs. Surface," the landlady who plays a small part in his mother's unfinished play of "A Journey to Bath." The Teazle family also furnished the good old uncle, originally styled "Sir Rowland Harpur," and even in the fused version he was entitled "Sir Oliver Roundhead," before his adoption into the Surface family as a nabob. The same fragment further supplied "Sir Christopher Crabtree," a name already mentioned in one of Sheridan's youthful essays. Of the "Clerimont" characters, Lady Sneerwell and Maria survived, but the latter no longer as a poor relation. That place was at first taken by a "Miss

[1] So, in the early list of characters, in one of the earliest prompt-books, Charles Surface is by error on one occasion mentioned as "Florival." It is curious to note that an early French version was entitled "Valsain et Florville," which would almost seem to point to information derived from Sheridan. Cf. the Bibliography at the end of Vol. II.

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Aurora Alethea," subsequently entitled "Miss Virginia Verjuice," though eventually she was removed from the mischief-making circle. "Lady" (afterwards "Mrs.") Candour and the steward Rowley, were additions to the cast, while the part of "Moses" followed on the new hero's extravagance. Sheridan's nicety in names stamps the whole genesis of the piece. "Snake," Lady Sneerwell's accomplice, began as "Spatter," and the footman was "Spunge" and "Spangle" before he ended in "Trip." Gaps too were filled up as the play proceeded. At first only "Careless" was named among Charles's boon companions, and "Sir Harry Bumper" made his first appearance in the later prompt-books. The famous toasting song formed a finishing touch to the drama.

The rough material was now hammered out, and Sheridan set himself to emboss it. The "Clerimont" play opened much as does "The School for Scandal," except that the part of "Snake" was taken by Miss Verjuice, the seasoned spinster, and that one long passage was expunged.[1] Sheridan then lightened and polished the whole. The highly-wrought passages were bandied from mouth to mouth. Lady Teazle's answer to Joseph's homily, that it meant sinning in her own defence and parting with her virtue to preserve her reputation, was originally a *mot* of Sir Benjamin's, and indeed it had been previously hinted in a notebook together with other sentences, some of them thrown aside.[2] The impeachment of Snake as not having virtue

[1] "VERJUICE: That is in as fine a train as your Ladyship could wish. I told the story yesterday to my own maid with directions to communicate it immediately to my hairdresser. He, I am informed, has a brother who courts a milliner's 'prentice in Pall Mall, whose mistress has a first cousin whose sister is *femme-de-chambre* to Lady (Mrs.) Clackit,—so that in the common course of things it must reach Mrs. C.'s ears within four-and-twenty hours, and then you know the business is as good as done." In one of the early prompt-books Sheridan erased the following:—"LADY SNEERWELL: I wish my cousin Verjuice had not left us. She would answer you. SNAKE: Ah! She's an old maid, you know, and is privileged of course."

[2] Among the latter is a trope which he utilised afterwards in his notes for his unachieved comedy on "Affectation": "The critic when he gets out of his carriage should always recollect that his footman from behind is gone up to judge as well as himself."

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enough to be faithful to his own villainy, at first Lady Sneerwell's, was now more suitably allotted to Joseph. Part of the bit about valetudinarians in reputation (also worked up from the note-book) was handed on from Spatter to Sir Benjamin, and in this case the crisping process may stand for a mass of specimens. Sheridan's commonplace book ushered in its first shape as follows: "The character of a Prude is beset by a scandalous tale as the strongest constitutions are most hurt by a Fever. But there is a kind of sickly reputation that holds up a long time . . . in the dark. There is a sort of valetudinarian in reputation. Being conscious how delicate her character is, she preserves it with great attention." The passage (as so often with Sheridan) was next split into two for the purpose of the "Clerimont" dialogue :—

"MRS. C.: Yes, a tale of Scandal is as fatal to the Credit of a Prude as a fever to those of the strongest Constitution. But there is a sort of sickly reputation that outlives hundreds of the robuster character of a Prude.

"SPATTER: True, Ma'am. There are Valetudinarians in Reputation as in constitution, and both are cautious from their appreciation and consciousness of their weak side, and avoid the least breath of air."

And then comes "The School for Scandal" modification, improved immensely by Sheridan's use of the file :—

"SIR BENJAMIN: O Lud, ma'am, that was the very reason 'twas believed at once. She has always been so cautious and so reserved, that everybody was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

"MRS. CANDOUR: Why, to be sure, a tale of Scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prudent lady of her stamp as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constitutions. But there is a sort of puny, sickly reputation that is always acting, yet will outlive the robuster characters of a hundred prudes.

"SIR B.: True, madam, there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as constitution who, being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air, and supply their want of stamina by care and circumspection."[1]

[1] One of the prompt-books varies the opening sentence into, "You have mentioned the very circumstance that made it be believed." Mrs. Candour's opening sentence was omitted by the Dublin editions. In one of his corrections in the early prompt copies (Sheridan MSS.) Sheridan put "reputation" instead of "credit." The succeeding passage and the whole story, which it introduces, about Miss Piper (originally named "Miss Shepherd") were at first erased by Sheridan and then restored.

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Here we can peep into the author's workshop, and its back-room of the commonplace book, which further comprised the earliest hint for malice being the "barb" that makes wit stick. Other after-distributions of the pieces relegate some to one part of the play, some to another. Such rearrangements are responsible for the discordant note which Sir Peter strikes in a pathetic part of the screen scene, when, notwithstanding his tears, he declares that he never "denied" the suspected Charles, —his "advice." And to the tessellation is partly due the sameness of accent in the mouths of differing persons, though even so it should be noted that neither Sir Oliver, Rowley, nor, as a rule, Sir Peter, speak like the rest. Wit, however, need not de-individualise character, and in discussing "The Rivals" we have already glanced at both Congreve's example and Sheridan's own whimsical explanation.[1]

Improvements appeared in succession, and some of them are significant. Joseph was at first purely a contriving villain. That which now distinguishes him, his assumed sentiment, was an afterthought, and Sheridan ushered in the new character by interpolating at its outset, "in short, a sentimental knave."[2] In the same dialogue where Lady Sneerwell avows her passion for Charles, she was originally made to own, "Notwithstanding his vices, you can't help feeling for him";[3] this Sheridan eliminated, and left Charles to speak for himself. Crabtree's famous allusion to "Petrarch's Laura and Waller's Saccharissa" replaced a trite mention of "Plutarch's Lives," while the ludicrous detail in his figment of the duel about the bullet grazing "a little bronze Shakespeare" happily amended "a little bronze Pliny."[4] Sir Benjamin's metaphor of a "neat

[1] Cf. *ante*, Ch. IX.

[2] This line is missing even in the Frampton Court autograph. It was introduced into the earliest prompt-book (Sheridan MSS.) in Sheridan's hand, and it appears in the copied transcript (1777) in the writer's possession.

[3] It stands in the autograph of the conversation between Lady Sneerwell and Miss Verjuice.

[4] It so stands in the writer's transcript (1777) and in the Frampton Court manuscript. "Fireplace," too, was altered from "chimney-piece."

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rivulet of text" and "meadow of margin" was a gloss, and the word "meander," a decided improvement on "run" and "murmur."[1] The presence or absence of another change as felicitous also enables us to decide the phase of the play in any particular copy. Of "Mrs. Clackit" Snake observes at the opening, "She wants that delicacy of *tint* and mellowness of sneer which distinguish your ladyship's scandal." "Tint" was originally "hint," and Sheridan did not alter it till his comedy was being rehearsed.[2] Mr. Rae has noticed, as an after-refinement, that Sheridan changed the loose description of Sir Peter as "a kind of guardian" into "guardian," but Sir Peter elsewhere describes himself as "in a manner left his guardian," so that not much can be made of this difference. A better instance of the refining process is to be found in the same person's repugnance to being congratulated on his marriage. "What, as we drink health to a friend in a consumption!" well transforms the bald sentence of the original—"You may tell him it is too late."

More of this anatomy would be wearisome, and few, perhaps, will believe that the comedy was so serious an undertaking. But some other amendments are significant. When the screen falls, Sir Peter ejaculates, "Lady Teazle, by all that's damnable!"; in the Frampton autograph Sheridan softened this, after his manner, to "horrible." Nothing, indeed, gave him more trouble than the screen-episode, and Garrick, in a familiar letter of congratulation the day after the performance, pointed out that the actors stood too long in dumb suspense at the supreme moment.[3] Two omissions from the original are not without interest. The

Among many other changes, "differ" in the second bickering of the Teazles, stood "quarrel."

[1] "Murmur" still remains in the first Dublin editions.

[2] It occurs first in his correction of the earliest prompt-book. In the writer's transcript the "h" has been erased, and the "t" substituted. An English edition, published in Paris in 1789, retains "hint," and so the French version published the same year in London, "*cette touche imperceptible.*"

[3] This is the letter in which Garrick inquires after Mrs. Sheridan—"How is the Saint to-day?"

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underplot of Snake's forgery—a legacy of the melodrama—found more scope in the play as it appeared in the prompt-books than at present, while lengthy dialogues about his villainies between Rowley and Sir Oliver were judiciously cancelled. Once more, a characteristic conversation in the fourth act between Joseph and Lady Teazle about Maria's looks, dropped out also. "Surely she has fine eyes," remarks Surface. "Why, so she has," rejoins the jealous lady, "though sometimes one fancies there is a little sort of squint." "Squint! O fie, Lady Teazle," begins the rogue who expatiates on her features, "there *is* a left-handed Cupid in one of her eyes." This hint, however, was not lost, for Sheridan included it in his dedication to Mrs. Crewe:—

> "And thou who seest her speak and dost not hear,
> Mourn not her distant accents 'scape thine ear;
> Viewing those lips, thou still may'st make pretence
> To judge of what she says, and swear 'tis sense;
> * * * * *
> But dost thou farther watch, with charmed surprise,
> The mild irresolution of her eyes,
> Curious to mark how frequent they repose
> In brief eclipse and momentary close—
> *Ah! seest thou not, an ambushed Cupid there,*
> Too timorous of his charge, with jealous care
> Veils and unveils those beams of heavenly light,
> Too full, too fatal else for mortal sight."

Enough has been said of the "School's" originality; it is certainly more plagiarised from than plagiarising. But a word of duty must be devoted to the worn topic of its "plagiarisms." The hypocrites of literature have been scrutinised to account for Joseph. Congreve's Maskwell will not fit him, for Maskwell is sombre and saturnine; Fielding's quack philosopher is equally remote; of Molière's "Tartuffe" we have already spoken. Not one of the stage impostors suggests Joseph's demure and dapper sentimentality. Even a poor play by Arthur Murphy, entitled, "Know Your Own Mind," has been pressed into service and its "Malvil" singled out as Joseph Surface's original. This, however, is a false scent. Beyond the fact that Malvil is a traitor held up as a pattern of propriety, and that in a single instance

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he airs a trace of "the man who," there is little real likeness between them.[1] Malvil is a dull dog with nothing plausible about him, and when he is exposed, he simply challenges proof. But the improbability of Sheridan's debt to an author like Murphy does not end here. "Know Your Own Mind" first appeared at Covent Garden on February 22, 1777, about ten weeks before "The School for Scandal" was produced. Garrick composed its epilogue, and twelve years later Sheridan had it performed at Drury Lane. Garrick would hardly have waxed so enthusiastic over his young friend's *chef-d'œuvre*, and his young friend would scarcely have sanctioned the subsequent performance of Murphy's comedy on his own boards, if either of them had been conscious that it would injure "The School for Scandal." Moreover, Murphy's piece was itself adapted from a French comedy, the "Irresolu" of Destouches, and contains a sentence stolen bodily from Bolingbroke which, by the way, is used to characterise Malvil.[2] We must therefore dismiss "Know Your Own Mind," as we have dismissed "Tartuffe" and Congreve's "Double Dealer," a play which Sheridan also revived at Drury Lane. But a stray hint or so for "Joseph Surface" may well come from "Vizard" in Farquhar's "The Constant Couple," and these vague assimilations have hitherto passed unobserved. "Vizard" is a smug, downright hypocrite, who bears little resemblance to the dexterous Joseph, but in some superficial features he recalls him. Like Joseph, he uses books as a blind for his vices—the very *trait* which roused the young Shelley's ire when Peacock dragged him to see the "School."[3] Vizard is held

[1] "Sir John, give me leave to say the man who busies himself about other people's affairs is a pragmatical character and very dangerous in society" (Act I., Sc. I.). This does not much resemble one of Joseph's sentiments. Later on he says seriously that there is "something voluptuous in meaning well."

[2] "A compound of *false charity and real malice*." This comes from Bolingbroke's "Letter to Windham." "Know Your Own Mind" was revived at Covent Garden on December 13, 1786; at Drury Lane on April 13, 1789; at the Haymarket on August 19, 1811; and it died the death at Bath on February 1, 1819.

[3] Cf. Peacock's article on Shelley in *Fraser's Magazine* for June, 1858. In the opening scene of "The Constant Couple" Vizard pulls out a book on

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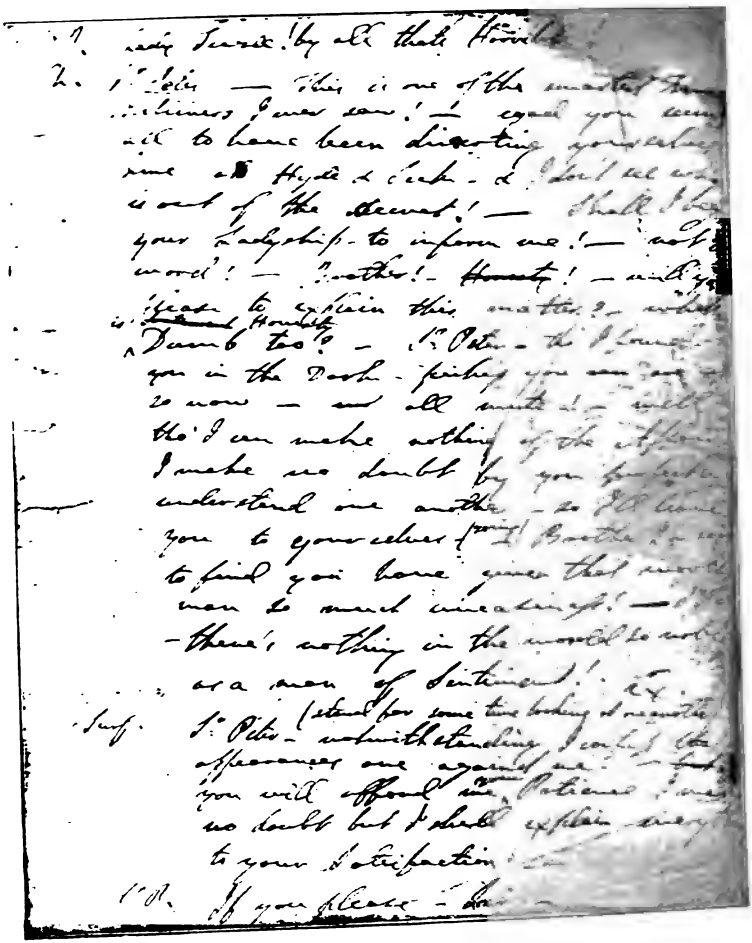

Page of the Screen Scene in the 'School for Scandal,'
from Sheridan's original manuscript
(in the possession of Algernon Sheridan, Esquire).

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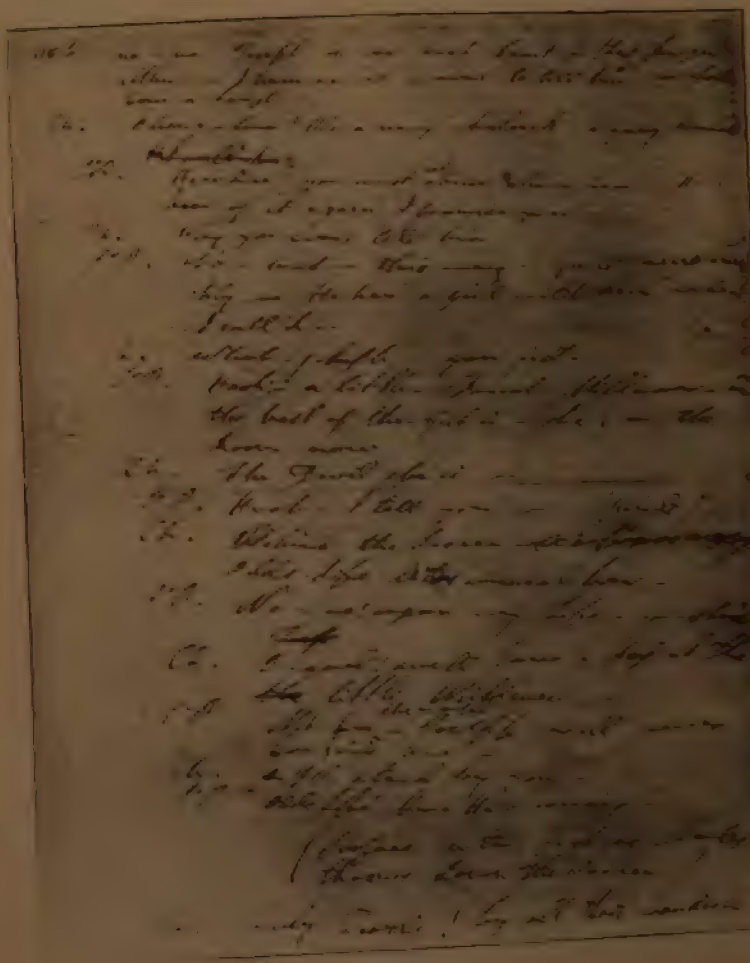

Facsimile of Screen Scene in the "School for Scandal"
from Sheridan's own (first) manuscript
in the possession of Algernon Sheridan, Esquire.

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up as "a pattern" to youth. Vizard, too, worships respectability more than the enjoyments which it masks: "I would sooner forfeit my life, nay, my pleasure," he owns, "than my reputation." Remembering that a chance phrase from this piece also found its way into "The Rivals," and how fond Sheridan was of Farquhar, we may guess that some "faded ideas" from it "floated in his imagination." They amount to very little, scarcely to more than can be squeezed out of the "Damn your morals" of Congreve's "Bluffe," whose character has no connection with Joseph, or from the Congreve trick of the participle-adjective in phrases like "a forgetting night" that suggest Sheridan's "damned disinheriting countenance."[1] The mould and stamp, however, of Joseph remain original and differ him from all other hypocrites on the comic stage. So too with the method of his unmasking. In Congreve's "Double Dealer"—one of Tartuffe's many off-shoots—Lady Touchwood and Cynthia listen behind a screen, but they only overhear at a distance: there is no discovery. In Cumberland's "West Indian" there is a listener behind a door, but the situation is different, and the device conventional. Vizard acts by a letter, and the letter betrays him, as seems to have been Sheridan's first expedient in the "Clerimont" play. Molière's Tartuffe is clumsily hidden under a table when Orgon detects him. Sheridan's screen scene, with its double ambush of wife and husband, its quick movement and the air of practical joke that belongs to comedy, is as ingenious as it is graceful. If any hint came from the sordid lurking-place of Moll Seagrim in Thwackum's garret, the impression of the whole is so dissimilar that Fielding would have been puzzled at the likeness. As for the "Spanish" source to which some have ascribed the episode, it is unnamed, and seems mythical. A nearer analogy

the arrival of his "Uncle Smuggler," who remarks, "Ay, there's a pattern for the young men of the times," etc. Vizard affects not to notice him with the aside, "This Hobbes is an excellent fellow."

[1] The first quotation comes from "Love for Love." The same play has also "a damned Tyburn face," so that the "damned disinheriting countenance" may have sprung from the two conjoined.

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is furnished by Almaviva's ambush in Beaumarchais' "The Barber of Seville," preceding the "School" by two years, and afterwards acted in London. Sheridan's indebtedness, however, was probably to some incident in real life, and the big screen in the "Upper Rooms" at Bath has already been noticed. The elegance of *tournure* throughout Sheridan's comedy reaches its acme in this climax. "If Aristotle himself had written a whole chapter professedly against screens," wrote Cumberland himself, "I would not have placed Lady Teazle out of earshot to have saved his ears from the pillory."

Half echoes of Restoration comedy are also audible in other parts of the "School." Vanbrugh's "Relapse," which became Sheridan's "Trip to Scarborough," speaks of "speculative love"; the "School" speaks of "speculative" benevolence. Vanbrugh, again, in his "Provoked Wife" uses the phrase of "Damn your morals."[1] Congreve's "Way of the World" makes a scandalmonger titter when a girl looks pale. The same malicious insinuation is levelled at Maria. No stress can be laid on the duplication of names any more than in the case of "The Rivals." Sheridan's "Surface," as we have seen, hails from a minor part in his mother's unpublished play, and Sheridan had first named his brace of brothers "Pliant" and "Plausible." Wycherley's "Plain Dealer" has a "Plausible," and Congreve's "Double Dealer" a "Plyant." Ben Jonson and Suckling had begun the lyrical succession of toasting songs, and Congreve's "Way of the World" followed them with "Prithee fill me the glass."[2] And further, a conceit in the

[1] In the person of "Sir John Brute."

[2] This, however, is more nearly related to "The Duenna's" "A bumper of good liquor," for "And let good humour pass" is a line common to the two. But the "let it pass" was the refrain of every toast. One of the detectives, anxious to deny authorship to Sheridan, by microscopic researches has sought to find the source of "Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen" in some conventional verses from "The Goblins," by Sir John Suckling, which Sheridan, as we have seen, meant to have adapted:—

"A health to the nutbrown lass
With hazel eyes—let it pass—
She that hath good eyes.
* * *

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"School's" closing verses (verses constantly trimmed and varied) may be due to Farquhar, though the plagiary-hunters have misascribed it to a phrase in a "Life of Dr. Clarke." The line runs, "Thou still must rule because I must obey." In Farquhar's "Sir Harry Wildair" occurs "For neither would stoop to command 'cause both thought it glory to obey." It is to Farquhar in the main that we must look for these scattered promptings. His wicked Lady Lurewell, to whom "nothing is so sweet as a malicious story," says, "I hate to have any woman more virtuous than myself." And here perhaps we get the foundation of Lady Sneerwell. But Farquhar more than all his compeers drew from Nature, and Lady Lurewells and Sneerwells abounded at Bath. The wish to drag down Sheridan by leaving him nothing of his own belongs to the Sneerwell character. When Watkins wrote his so-called "Memoirs" of Sheridan, he repeated a slander that actually ascribed "The School for Scandal" to "a young lady in Thames Street." In like manner one Eccles, a clergyman, laid claim to the authorship of Mackenzie's "Man of Feeling," and in modern days another pretender claimed to have written "Adam Bede." Sheridan never troubled to refute such tattle, which was not confined to his comedies. As he once wrote, he was "inured to misrepresentation."[1]

Let it pass, let it pass
As much to the lovely grey.
* * *
I pledge! I pledge! Ho! some wine,
Here's to thine, and to thine!
The colour was divine,
But, oh, the black, the black."

The toasting of eyes is also a commonplace, and Sheridan's song is one of a long series, though it boasts a *timbre* and *abandon* of its own. Suckling's song was familiar to him, but "I warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass" is an original refrain. Sheridan's song might quite as easily be traced to Ben Jonson's, to Tony Lumpkin's ditty in "She Stoops to Conquer" or to kindred ditties before it. No one would search for plagiarism in epitaphs, yet epitaphs and drinking songs are much in the same predicament.

[1] Letter ("Private, Monday evening") in the writer's possession. It

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"The School for Scandal" enjoyed exceptional fortune in its first performers. "No piece," said Charles Lamb, "was ever so completely cast as this *Manager's* Comedy." Walpole called it "a marvellous resurrection of the stage." Sheridan's last touches had kept each of the performers in view. King—the Lord Ogleby of Garrick's "Clandestine Marriage"—played Sir Peter. Mrs. Abington, the "Lady Bab" who was ever young though past forty, interpreted Lady Teazle as the finished woman of fashion; while some years afterwards Mrs. Jordan represented her with equal perfection on her other side—that of the country girl. Mrs. Abington's every word, said King, "stabbed," and only her want of youth was criticised by the journals.[1] Smith, "the smart, the airy and polite," was Charles Surface, a part undertaken some decade and a half later by the portly John Kemble. And Joseph was portrayed, as by all accounts he has never been since and is unlikely to be again, by Jack Palmer, whose downcast asides to the audience of "downright acted villainy" let them into the secret of his sentiments and the recesses of his character. Palmer the plausible was a born Joseph Surface. On one truant occasion, when after shamming sickness he shammed humility also, and, hand on heart, excused himself with "If you could but know what I feel at this moment *here!*" Sheridan at once stopped him with "Why, Jack, you forget that *I wrote it.*" But Palmer-Joseph prevailed, and the return of the penitent cost the manager three pounds a week increase of salary.[2] Lady

concerns a "paragraph in the *Sun*," which, he says, "inured as I am to misrepresentation, surprises and vexes me." Of this paper Sheridan once quoted its motto, "*Solem quis dicere falsum, Audeat!*"

[1] Cf. "Life of Mrs. Abington" (by the Editor of "The Life of Quin"), pp. 89, 90.

[2] Palmer was first intended for the army, then for art, and he began his theatrical career as box-keeper to Garrick. We have already noted that for a space Palmer acted as Sheridan's sub-manager at Drury Lane. In 1787 he seceded from Drury Lane and set up for himself in the newly-built Royalty, which, however, had not been sanctioned for legal performances. Being required for the part of Joseph Surface at his old theatre, he issued a manifesto setting forth that, having been insulted

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JOHN PALMER

(the first impersonator of Joseph Surface)

from an engraving

(in the Thespian Dictionary).

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Sneerwell was represented by the supple Miss Sherry, and Mrs. Candour by Miss Pope, who for more than twenty years had been a mainstay of Drury Lane. The minor parts were equally well filled. Dodd, "the prince of pink heels and empty eminence," was Sir Benjamin, and Parsons, the future original of Sir Fretful Plagiary, lent quaintness to Crabtree. Baddeley, the stock impersonator of aliens, made a hit as Moses, and Lamash as the gentleman's gentleman. From an autograph note on his manuscript it would seem that Sheridan had desired a part for Woodward also, and Maria was certainly to have been played by the lackadaisical Mrs. Robinson. But the "Perdita" to come was now *hors de combat*, and her part was filled by the prompter's daughter. Had "Perdita" been Maria instead of Miss Hopkins, the long love passages between her and Charles Surface would have sentimentalised the dialogue.

And Sheridan himself contributed to their interpretation. He supervised the rehearsals with unremitting discrimination. When Mrs. Abington delivered the line "How dare you abuse my relations?" "That will not do," he said; "it must not be pettish. That's shallow, shallow. You must go up the stage with, 'You are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be,' and then turn, and sweep down on Sir Peter like a volcano,—'You are a great bear to abuse my relations! How *dare* you abuse my relations?'" The scene was witnessed by an ancestress of the late Charles Reade, who communicated it to Miss Ellen Terry, and it is a pleasure to record that in the recent revival

by Linley and the other managers as "a vagrant, rogue, and vagabond," he had broken with Drury Lane, though on this special occasion he would not disappoint the public. The Direction, however, refused, one of his brothers took the part, and eventually, disappointed of obtaining a patent for the Royalty, he returned to his old allegiance. Cf. "The Thespian Dictionary" (1805), which adds many curious details. Palmer died in August, 1796, during a Liverpool performance of "The Stranger." It was said that he fell down while declaiming, "There is another and a better land," but it was probably in delivering another sentence that he expired. Two of his brothers were actors, and it is probably to Robert Palmer that Sheridan referred in a late letter to Richardson's widow as behaving badly towards Drury Lane.

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of the play at His Majesty's Theatre, the talented Miss Marie Löhr reproduced Sheridan's rendering.[1]

The success of such a combination was unbounded. The century recognised its own countenance in this looking-glass of manners. Night after night the theatre overflowed, and for a space even the American War was forgotten in the sensation of the moment. During the seasons of 1777 to 1778 and 1778 to 1779 it was performed no fewer than seventy-three times, and realised nearly £15,000, or over 20 per cent. of the whole capital embarked in the theatre.[2] A note in the accounts records that it "damped" every other piece, though, among many, such favourites as "The Tempest" and Congreve's "Old Bachelor" were included; while Sheridan obliged Cumberland by playing his "West Indian," revived his mother's comedy of "The Discovery," and sought to humour his already murmuring father by lending the stage for his lectures.[3] The comedy had come to stay, and the next season, which also revived "The Rivals," still reaped close on £3,000 by the "School," the performances of which even during the seasons of 1781–2 gathered nearly the same harvest. The representations of it in the following year excited as much applause as on its first production,[4] and in 1787, the tenth year of its life was marked with equal appreciation. Miss Farren succeeded Mrs. Abington as Lady Teazle, though the fine manners of the future countess could not equal the

[1] For the story, cf. Ellen Terry's "Story of my Life" (1908), p. 49.

[2] The exact sum realised was £14,480 8*s.* 6*d.*, and if the receipts of 1776-7 be added, the total amounted to £21,128. In 1777–8 his three plays of "The Rivals," "Duenna," and "School for Scandal," brought in £6,838 17*s.*

[3] Sheridan MSS., the accounts of Drury Lane, partly in Mrs. Sheridan's handwriting. A tell-tale entry of two guineas for "lectures" betrays old Sheridan's presence. He, after Linley, and one "Younger," had acted, at first informally, as sub-manager, but about 1780 he was replaced by King, and began his second quarrel with his son. In that year a play was performed called "The Times," by a Mrs. Griffiths, who, in her preface to the printed edition, states her obligation to old Sheridan as manager. King twice relinquished his post, once in 1788, when he published an indignant letter of protest, but he returned. In the interim Palmer and Grubb acted as "managers," or rather as sub-managers.

[4] Sheridan's MS., Tickell Corr.

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'PERDITA' ROBINSON,
from a rare engraving,
(in the Author's possession),
after the miniature by Engleheart.

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exquisite airs of the self-made lady. This part was the last acted by Miss Farren in her farewell year of 1797, and the play, then twenty years old, once more achieved a signal triumph. In the provinces it met with the same favour. Bath, naturally attracted to Sheridan's masterpiece, saw it acted within a few months of its first appearance at Old Drury, and by the account of Bernard, who played Sir Benjamin, it created a *furore*. Sheridan came down on purpose to superintend the rehearsals, and spent a fortnight in fastidious attention to the smallest details. "Nothing, however," writes Bernard, "could be more pleasant or polite than his manner. In his sensitiveness as an author he never lost sight of his propriety as a gentleman. The person who gave him most trouble was Edwin, who was continually forgetting his business. . . . Sheridan with the utmost good humour put him right every morning." At the last rehearsal, however, Edwin would have provoked a saint, for the punch supper of the previous evening had wiped away his memory. Sheridan "could not restrain his feelings, but at the first *lapsus* shouted out 'Good God! Mr. Edwin, there you go again!—You've lost your situation.'" Neither situation nor play, however, was lost, and, adds Bernard, "the hit was even greater here than in town."[1] Everywhere the "School" proved a mine of wealth to the theatres. Throughout Sheridan's lifetime it maintained its popularity, and his death was honoured by a memorial performance, in which Mrs. Davison took the title-*rôle* and Wallack the part of Joseph Surface. It soon crossed the Atlantic and became the favourite play of George Washington, as has been recorded by Mrs. Whitelock, a sister of Mrs. Siddons, and long a leading *tragédienne* in America. It was probably first acted in New York on December 16, 1785, with a cast the strongest possible. Mr. Brander Matthews has told us that it soon became a standard by which other comedies were measured, as "equal to 'The School for Scandal,'" or "to any play of the century, 'The School for Scandal' not excepted."

In "The Contrast," a five act comedy by Royal Tyler,

[1] Cf. Bernard's "Retrospections of the Stage," Vol. I., pp. 187—189.

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afterwards Chief Justice of Vermont, given in New York during April, 1786, "Jonathan," an innocent who fancies a theatre to be "the devil's drawing-room," thus confirms the vogue of Sheridan's *chef-d'œuvre*:—

"... There was one youngster, they called him Mr. Joseph; he talked as sober and as pious as a minister; but, like some ministers that I know, he was a sly 'tyke' in his heart, for all that: he was going to ask a young woman to spark it with him, and—the Lord have mercy on my soul!—she was another man's wife."[1]

Since then the "School" has long flourished in America. The English Macready acted Joseph there to the general admiration in 1826, and in 1877 the American Miss Genevieve Ward played Lady Teazle with equal success in Paris. Nearly ninety years earlier France showed its appreciation, and indeed even in 1792, Beaumarchais' "L'autre Tartuffe, ou La Mère Coupable," showed signs of Sheridan's influence.[2] In 1788 the auction and screen scenes figured in a version called "Les Deux Neveux." In 1789 Monsieur Delille printed a French translation in London; while in the same year an English text of the "School" was published in Paris.[3] Parts of it were used in "Portraits de

[1] Cf. Mr. Brander Matthews's excellent introduction to his illustrated edition of "Sheridan's Comedies" (1885).

[2] This play was the third and last of the Figaro series. The character of Bégearss, described by Beaumarchais as "an Irish major of Spanish infantry" and "an ex-secretary to Count Almaviva when Ambassador," is the Joseph Surface of the plot. A hypocrite of the deepest dye, he rebukes the Count much in the way that Joseph rebukes the traducers of his brother: "What, set a snare, spring a surprise! Who with the least delicacy would wish to take such an advantage of his worst enemy?" And in another place he ends a fine sentiment with the hiatus of "For it must be confessed that——." In the end he admits that "intrigue destroys its author."

[3] Delille's version is "L'Ecole du Scandale, ou Les Mœurs du Jour, Comédie par Monsieur Sheridan: Traduite en Français par M. Bunel Delille, Avocat au Parlement de Paris. A Londres: Imprimé par Galabin Ingram Court," etc. The title-page has the motto, "*Contra la médisance il n'est point de rempart*," from the first act of "Tartuffe." The English version published in Paris is "The School for Scandal, A Comedy. Paris. Printed for Theophilus Barrois, Bookseller, rue Hautefeuille, No. 22, 1789." It is exceedingly rare, but the writer has a "fifth edition."

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Miss POPE,

the original impersonator of Mrs. Candour in the

'School for Scandal,'

from an old print.

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Famille," the "Deux Cousins," and "Valsain et Florville." In 1789 Paris first saw the whole play represented as "L'Homme Sentimental," but certain episodes offended French taste, and even Grimm confessed to being shocked. Another paraphrase, however, called the "Tartuffe des Mœurs," soon proved acceptable at the Théâtre Français. In the eighteen-thirties two melodramatists collaborated in a fresh adaptation—"L'École du Scandale," which displayed Madame Dorval as "Milady Tizlé" at the Porte St. Martin. In 1822 the same home of French melodrama witnessed the first performance of Sheridan's play in English, which was given by a Brighton company; but the day, Friday, August 2, proved unlucky, and the mob, fresh from a spell of Shakespeare, would not suffer the comedy to proceed. Five years later, however, when the Covent Garden troupe visited the Odéon, both the "School" and "The Rivals" found an enthusiastic welcome, and henceforward, "The School for Scandal" remained a French textbook for teaching our language. Nor was Germany backward in admiration. Schröder hurried from Vienna to London in 1785 expressly to produce an adaptation from memory, just as in the preceding year Holcroft hurried from London to Paris to hear Beaumarchais' "Mariage de Figaro" for the same purpose. In Germany Schröder's "Die Schule der Verleumdung" has persevered, and the comedy has travelled elsewhere. It was acted in Venice during Macready's lifetime; in 1807 it was printed in English at Copenhagen; in 1877 it was represented in Dutch at The Hague, and in 1884 a Gujerati version, "suited to modern Parsee manners," was written by a Mr. K. N. Kabrajee, and acted at the Esplanade Theatre in Bombay with marked applause. In Toronto the centenary of its birth was celebrated by a gala performance at the Grand Opera House in the presence of Sheridan's great-grandson, the late Lord Dufferin, who was then Governor-General of Canada.[1] Sheridan's reputation has thus made more than the tour of Europe—without leaving its own country.

[1] For these details cf. Mr. Brander Matthews's "Introduction," above cited, and also Moore's "Life," among other sources.

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In England we have seen the "School" again and again. Within present memory Sir Henry Irving, Miss Ellen Terry, Mrs. Kendal and Mr. Charles Coghlan have adorned the three principal parts. The great revival by the Bancrofts, in which Mr. Farren continued the traditions of Sir Peter, will be remembered by many, while the minuet scene which it introduced still decorates the curtain of the Haymarket. In recent years the same playhouse revived it under the auspices of Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Maude, and still more recently the Comptons again revived it at the St. James's. But perhaps the greatest revival within the memory of living playgoers has been Mr. Beerbohm Tree's during the April of 1909. That representation proved unique in at least four respects. Its spectacle revived the century; its actors combined veterans recalled from retirement with youthful talent; its interpretation restored the modern undertone that marks the play; and Miss Marie Löhr as Lady Teazle was able to teaze the dignity of Sir Peter as the country girl aspiring to be a lady of fashion. Only one so young could thus have restored Sheridan's conception. Mrs. Abington was forty when she played the part, and Mrs. Jordan was forty-seven. Miss Löhr was not nineteen, and now for the first time Sir Peter ceased to be an antique laughing-stock and became a middle-aged human being.

Even before Sheridan entered Parliament, his great comedy was complimented by becoming at once a vehicle for party satire and a target of personal abuse. In 1779, under its own name and with a mock dedication to Tickell, it was used to mock Lord North; in 1784—an even rarer example—to deride the Coalition;[1] and in 1780, when Sheridan had just taken his seat for Stafford on the side of the extreme reformers, it evoked a smart lampoon entitled "An Epistle from Joseph Surface, Esq.

[1] "The School for Scandal, A Comedy in Five Acts, As it is performed by His Majesty's Servants, etc. Never before printed. London: Printed for G. Lester, No. 46 Old Bailey." The earlier satire is "The School for Scandal, A Comedy. London: Sold by S. Bladon, Pater-noster-row, and I. Thresher, No. 38 Manchester Square."

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to Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq. of Great Queen Street."[1] Throughout his career Sheridan was assailed as Charles or Joseph Surface, or as both, while a piquancy was added to these assaults by the fact that he stubbornly refused to authorise any English edition of the text and only presented his friends with transcripts.[2] Two reasons seem to have prompted this action. At the outset he was keen to prevent the unauthorised performances which a printed edition would enable, while later on he could never content himself with its form, which he continued to prune and polish. The received version dates from Moore's edition of 1823 and Leigh Hunt's of 1840, both of which were based on the six Dublin editions which appeared between 1778 and 1787, and three London ones, pirated in 1788, 1797 and 1798.[3] These editions stereotyped the style, which it is still said cannot be changed in any leading passage without spoiling the dramatic effect of the whole.

The history of the Dublin versions and of the comedy's *début* at the Smock Alley Theatre has been left in obscurity, but here contemporary newspapers assist us. A "Dublin Letter" in the *Public Advertiser* of January 31, 1778, tells us that "Miss Sheridan, sister of the manager of Drury Lane, being presented by her brother with a copy of 'The School for Scandal,' that lady lately sold the copy to Mr. Ryder, our manager, for 100 guineas, in consequence of which he brought it out last week." The first two nights, it continued, were crowded, but on the third the throng assembled "would have made five audiences," and so impatient were they that they battered in

[1] "London. Printed for G. Kearsley, No. 46 in Fleet Street (Price One Shilling and Six Pence)." This squib is exceedingly rare.

[2] In a letter, already cited, to his second wife, he implies that he had never sanctioned an English impression; and "A New Theatrical Dictionary" (1792) remarks that "'The School for Scandal' is still unprinted." The writer owns one of the written transcripts dated 1777.

[3] These also are rare. The one of 1797 was published by Millar in a collection of Sheridan's plays in the following year, that of 1798, by "E. Powell." Mr. Anderson's list omits the Dublin edition of 1786 with plates, and errs concerning the date of the earliest Dublin edition, which was Ewing's. Cf. Bibliography, Appendix, Vol. II.

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the doors. A long run, it adds, was now assured, and the "miserable prospect" of the theatre turned into a golden "harvest." The text then acted for the first time was presumably an undated edition by "J. Ewing, Dublin," published probably in 1779 or 1780, and the sole Irish issue that contains a list of *errata*. Further editions followed in 1781, 1782, 1785, 1786, and 1787, but there can be small doubt that Ewing's edition is the first imprint of the comedy.[1]

Something has been already said of how Sheridan intended the characters to be played. On a page of one of the autographs at Frampton Court is a caricature of Charles with a bottle. Charles with his bottle is the foil to Joseph with his book, and the geographical screen is his *vade mecum*. But though Joseph affects study as well as propriety, the tradition of habiting him in black is hardly consonant with his insinuating smartness. He is a "coxcomb" even in "books." Joseph would never attract attention by a peculiarity in costume. He should be attired in perfect taste, as befits the man who so nearly won Lady Teazle's heart. She, as Sheridan directed, ought to be dressed in the spick-and-span of fashion. Sheridan has left one other instruction as to apparel: "Crabtree should wear a muff." This macaronic ornament would make an aged fop the more ridiculous.

Undoubtedly Mrs. Crewe helped to inspire Sheridan during the last phases of his work. In two previous chapters allusion has been made to a late letter addressed to his second wife concerning a surreptitious edition of the verses which accompanied the transcript sent to that Egeria. This is the letter in which Sheridan wrote that he was reminded "what an ardent, romantic blockhead Nature made" him. Of the verses he says

[1] More than once the edition of 1781 has been described in auction sales as the "first" edition. The title-page of the true first edition is "The School for Scandal, A Comedy, Dublin. Printed for J. Ewing." Some dispute must have arisen as to the right to print the comedy in Ireland, for in the illustrated edition of 1786 the name of the publisher has been erased from the frontispiece, and "Printed for the Booksellers" stands on the title-page.

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that they were forwarded with a "finely bound" manuscript of the play. He had forgotten them, he adds, "which is not common with me"; while a postscript as characteristic owns that even then he has lost the paper with the verses and will "get it to-morrow." From these verses more than one excerpt has been given, but some of their most graceful lines are significant. Whether they were as welcome to the first Mrs. Sheridan as to their recipient may be questioned, but "Pierrot," we may be sure, could eventually explain them to her satisfaction.

> "Graced by those signs which truth delights to own,
> The timid blush and mild submitted tone:
> Whate'er she says, though sense appear throughout,
> Displays the tender hue of female doubt;
> Decked with that charm, how lovely wit appears,
> How graceful science, when that robe she wears!
> Such too her talents, and her bent of mind,
> As speak a sprightly heart by thought refined:
> A taste for mirth, by contemplation schooled,
> A turn for ridicule, by candour ruled,
> A scorn of folly, which she tries to hide:
> An awe of talent, which she owns with pride."

And it is clear from the closing lines that the shaft once aimed at the scandalmongers against himself, had now been turned against the impugners of "Amoret":—

> "Peace, idle Muse! no more thy strains prolong,
> But yield a theme, thy warmest praises wrong;
> Just to her merit, though thou canst not raise
> Thy feeble verse, behold th' acknowledged praise
> Has spread conviction through the envious train
> And cast a fatal gloom o'er Scandal's reign!
> And lo! each pallid hag, with blistered tongue,
> Mutters assent to all thy zeal hath sung—
> Owns all the colours just—the outline true;
> Thee my inspirer, and my model—Crewe."

Thus far we have striven to identify the soil and atmosphere of a play that will long continue to revisit the stage. The

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tender heartlessness of the eighteenth century has gone, but the comedy which crisped and ironised it makes a wider appeal. "He who can truly delight mankind," wrote Goethe, "need never fear the dart of Time."

"Wer menschen gründlich konnt' erfreuen,
Der darf sich vor der Zeit nicht scheuen."

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CHAPTER XII

REHEARSALS

(JANUARY, 1778—SEPTEMBER, 1780)

["THE ENGLISHMAN"—THE "ESSAY ON ABSENTEES"—"THE CRITIC"—THE "VERSES IN MEMORY OF GARRICK"—SHERIDAN'S SHARE IN "THE CAMP" AND OTHER PIECES—CLOSE OF HIS LITERARY CAREER—HIS ELECTION FOR STAFFORD.]

"And to employ yourself so idly at such an alarming crisis, when if you had the least spirit you would have been at the head of one of the Westminster Associations, or trailing a volunteer pike in the Artillery Ground! But you—on my conscience, I believe if the French were landed to-morrow, your first inquiry would be whether they had brought a theatrical troupe with them."

Mrs. Dangle in "The Critic."

ALL along Sheridan had nursed his political ambition. He aimed at management, and the new manager of Drury Lane soon aspired to manage the larger stage of the Theatre Royal, Westminster. Fame far more than substantial reward entered into his dreams, and when at length his moment arrived, it was against this unmercenary temper that his calculating brother warned him.[1] No director of a theatre had hitherto sat for a constituency, nor was it till 1780 that Sheridan's longings could be gratified. Parliamentary honours were then at once easier and more difficult than they are now. The small and exclusive circle of society offered a real help to career, whereas at present its miscellaneous vortex only absorbs one whose career is made or in the making. His theatrical profession, on the

[1] "... For God's sake improve the opportunity to the utmost, and don't let dreams of empty fame (of which you have had enough in all conscience) carry you away from your solid interests." C. F. to R. B. S. Sheridan, "DUBLIN, March 27, 1782"; Sheridan MSS., and cf. Moore, Vol. I., p. 370.

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other hand, was then a serious drawback, and without patronage no political start could well be made. Women, as ever, gave genius opportunity. Mrs. Sheridan's voice had proved her husband's "open sesame" to the palace of Georgiana the enchantress, who could unlock other sanctuaries as inaccessible. Sheridan's own charm had widened his acceptability; his last play had founded his fame. At length everything seemed in train for serious political effort. How his informal alliance was prized by the Foxites even at the opening of 1778, is shown by a letter to him from Windham concerning a concerted stand against Lord Townshend's efforts for a Norfolk subscription towards the further prosecution of the American War:—"I fear my letter will greatly disappoint your hopes. I have no account to send you of my answering Lord Townshend—of hard-fought contests—spirited resolves—ballads, mobs, cockades, and Lord North burnt in effigy. We have had a bloodless campaign, but not from backwardness in our troops. . . . We lie upon our arms and shall begin to act on any motion of our enemy. . . . When the coach comes in, I hope I shall receive a packet from you which shall not be lost, though it may not be used immediately. . . . Tell Mrs. Sheridan," he adds playfully, "that I hope she will have a closet ready, where I may remain till the heat of the pursuit is over. My friends in France have promised to have a vessel ready upon the coast."[1]

The moment was propitious. North, who had been hailed as a deliverer from Grafton, gained daily in public odium under the disasters of the American War, while Charles Fox, who had changed his tactics, led a powerful opposition. His bias towards extremes had not yet spread consternation among the chiefs of the old-fashioned Whigs, and the elastic name of Liberty in every direction lent a sort of sacrosanctity to his rage. Burgoyne's defeat, the American declaration of independence, the malicious trial of Keppel for his operations at Brest, the misfeasances of Lord George Germaine, humiliated

[1] To "Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq., Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields," from W. Windham, "January 5, 1778." Cf. Moore, Vol. I., p. 290

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and incensed a nation never sympathetic with a scheme for suppressing its kinsfolk; Chatham boldly proclaimed himself "an American,"[1] and as the King grew more obstinate and his ministers less capable, popular aspirations began to quicken. Twice, before the struggle beyond the seas opened, had the mild Rockingham mooted a scheme of parliamentary reform, with only half-hearted assent however from the theoretical Burke. The war had disturbed every element in the political horizon. The old Whiggism was perforce growing more pliant, and the new Radicalism more articulate. A "Westminster Association" to promote reform was already in contemplation. To thunder against the American War became almost synonymous with being a reformer. Corruption, pretty evenly distributed, was loudly denounced by the extremer Whigs, who at the same time arrogated a monopoly in purveying the milk of human kindness. An unpopular campaign constantly promotes domestic ferment, and the ferment was now aggravated by the reviving aggression of France, the menacing attitude of Spain, the gradual undoing of Chatham's glorious Peace of Paris, and all the European weather-signs that tracked the tempest across the Atlantic, and boded the "armed neutrality" of 1780. Sheridan, the friend of Fox and his friends, by predisposition an aristocratic Radical, felt himself in full accord with the crisis. It is the misfortune of politicians to fancy that a change of men or even of measures will regenerate a people, and the downfall of "Boreas" was imagined as promising a long millennium of peace and plenty. The thought of Lord North's overthrow was too much for the sanity of the Opposition. Fox swore

[1] "... I reprobate as much as any of you those acts of violence which a few of her nobility have committed; but when her inherent constitutional rights are invaded, ... then I own myself an American, and feeling myself as such, shall to the verge of my life vindicate her rights. If America, however, should at any time lose sight of this line, I shall be an Englishman, and defend those rights against any power under Heaven that would oppose them." Close of "The Speech of the Right Honourable Earl of Chatham in the House of Lords on Friday, the 20th of January, 1775. Dublin, 1775."

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that never would he shake hands with him again; Burke stalked about with an impeachment of him in his pocket. Yet only a few years later Fox and North coalesced, while Burke sat down under them as Paymaster of the Forces.

Sheridan warmly espoused the American cause, and, as warmly, he espoused the causes subsequently interwoven with it. We have seen him championing America in his "General Fast," and the unpublished reply to Dr. Johnson's "Taxation no Tyranny" which followed it. He had already defended Ireland in a long essay on "Absentees" which will presently receive attention, and which has hitherto been post-dated. For the nonce we must occupy ourselves with his attitude towards the American War in *The Englishman*, a short-lived Opposition organ of which he was the leading spirit, though Fox, Richard Burke, O'Beirne (afterwards Bishop of Meath) and Tickell are authoritatively named as contributors. It is probable that John Townshend, possible that Windham or Fitzpatrick, collaborated also, for the first is known to have read aloud Sheridan's best paper—that on Lord George Germaine—to Gibbon at Devonshire House, while he and the two others at this time were, like Sheridan, associates of Fox's confraternity. There is no doubt that Sheridan penned this essay, and the same signature with which it is subscribed is appended to four others, which therefore must likewise be Sheridan's. The rough draft of one of them—a letter to Lord North, the thirteenth of the series—still remains in his handwriting and among his manuscripts;[1] perhaps Tickell also, and possibly Windham, contributed.

[1] For Fox, cf. Lord Townshend's statement in Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 312, where the reading aloud of Sheridan's essay to Gibbon is also mentioned. For the three other contributors named, O'Beirne himself is the authority, cf. *ibid.*, p. 295. O'Beirne as quoted by Moore is evidently incorrect in the point most material, for he is made to say, "Sheridan *edited* it, but did not *write*, thus exactly reversing what ought to have been his department." This is disproved by the Sheridan MSS. and actually contradicts Lord J. Townshend's assertion just cited. Moore himself did not doubt Sheridan's authorship of the two papers, from which he gives excerpts.

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It was a threepenny newspaper, published twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays; the first number appeared on March 13, 1779, the last on June 2 of the same year, and there was an interval during which it was in abeyance. Nor is Sheridan's hand least apparent in the notice which accompanied the eighteenth number:—"The publisher [probably Wilkie] has received many letters complaining of want of punctuality in publishing the paper which he will communicate to the quarter whence he receives *The Englishman*, and flatters himself he shall be enabled to remedy the evil."

The paper mimicked Addison's *Freeholder* and Bolingbroke's *Craftsman* by addressing the common sense of the country. Each article was signed alphabetically, and we know that the "D." betokens Sheridan. Of the rest, the signature "*Z.*" at the end of a powerful indictment of the ministry in the ninth number, of Wednesday, March 14, may be guessed to mean Fox; "X.," affixed to a satirical account of reasons for Lord North's supposed suicide, Tickell; "M.," twice, and "A.," thrice repeated, to denote two of the others, "F.," of which there are three examples, to be Richard Burke, and "H.," of which there are two, O'Beirne.[1] Lord John Townshend told Moore that Fox was dissatisfied with the style of his own article and that Sheridan corrected it for him.[2]

Sheridan wrote the first number. Plain facts, he said, and plain figures presented to plain people were his object. The

[1] O'Beirne assured Moore that the "three last" were by "Tickell (*I think*), Richard Burke, and himself." But the paper signed "X." is the only one that would fit Tickell. The last *four* consist of three signed "F." on naval affairs, and one on the same topic by "H.," who had previously written on Ireland. This would not be unsuitable to O'Beirne. One of "M.'s" contributions relates to India, and "A.'s" to parliamentary motions and naval successes and reverses. Moore (who makes no analysis and does not mention either the signatures, or many passages of the text) states that Sheridan wrote the first number, and that number is signed "D." He wrote five others—numbers 2, 4, 8, 13—and an extra number of May 5. Moore is mistaken in making Sheridan's model Swift's "Drapier Letters." His article is addressed to "such of you plain *Freeholders* as have just sense enough to comprehend facts."

[2] Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 312.

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honest, industrious, unpolished citizens, as distinguished from professed "scholars" and "gentlemen," should form his court of appeal. "There is still a spirit left in the nation equal to any constitutional exertion that is to be raised and directed by an unornamental appeal to the understanding of the middling class of people who, notwithstanding the contempt which gentlemen of certain principles affect to hold them in, have ever had, and ever will have in times of actual peril, a deciding voice for removal and punishment of incapable or unprincipled ministers." In the fourth number he pursued this topic further. "People at a distance from the capital, unlike those in this curious and communicative city," required an explicit statement of affairs, and it was "no disrespect to their understanding" to tell them so. "An imaginative and figurative style, intelligible to those who daily hear little things, puzzles those only reached by wider circles."[1] In a word, this was to be provincial pudding.

He singles out Lord George Germaine, the War Minister, for special attack, and this, in a paper which Gibbon honoured with his approval:[2] "Tender-thinking people seem to think that as his character is dead in law, it should meet with the respect which forbids ill to be spoken of the dead. To pursue any man with reproach who was endeavouring to hide in solitude from the indelible disgrace inflicted on him by the sentence of a competent court and the voice of his profession, is an inhumanity out of the nature of Englishmen. But when that person presumptuously stands forth a candidate for the first situations of power and control, coveting to direct *a war wherein no success can furnish matter of triumph to a good mind*, are we to forget all former passages and grant him the privilege of obliterating private disgrace by superior guilt of ministerial delinquency? . . . If we elevate a degraded and reprobated officer to direct the military enterprise of the country, why not appoint atheists to the mitre, Jews to the exchequer, select a Treasury Bench from the *Justitia*, put Brown Dignam on the

[1] Papers (signed "D.") of March 13 and 27.
[2] Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 312.

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Woolsack and Sir Hugh Palliser at the head of the Admiralty?"[1]

Sheridan dealt more leniently with Lord North, whose wit, *insouciance* and good humour made him the Lord Palmerston of his day; but in his satire he departs from the first project of eschewing his natural ornateness.

". . . I speak with all due reverence of the noble lord's amiable endowments," he says in an unquoted passage; "yet no man couples the qualities of great activity and enterprise with Lord North."[2] In another number, where he lashes the First Minister's "fickleness," he spares him less: "The burlesque of my plan, I know, is rather a recommendation of it to your lordship; and the ridicule you might throw on this assembly by continuing to support this Athanasian distinction of powers in the unity of an apparently corporate body, might in the end compensate to you for the discredit you have incurred in the attempt. A deliberate body of so *uncommon a form* would probably be deemed a kind of State monster by the ignorant and vulgar. . . . They would probably approach it with as much reverence as Stephano does the monster in 'The Tempest': 'What, one body and two voices—a most delicate monster!' However, they would soon grow familiarised . . . and probably hold it in as little respect as they were wished to do. They would find it on many occasions 'a very shallow monster,' and particularly 'a most poor *credulous* monster,' while your lordship as keeper would enjoy every advantage that could be made of it. You would have the benefit of the *two voices* which . . . would be peculiarly serviceable to your

[1] Number 4 (signed "D."), March 27, 1779. Dignam, as candidate for the borough of Hindon, had invented a plot against the King's life, played the informer in Lord Temple's interest, and had then taken to "selling places for others which all his merit could not obtain for himself, and so he is only in Newgate." (Cf. Horace Walpole to Mason, March 13, 1779; also cited by Rae, Vol. I., p. 351.) Palliser had been Keppel's insubordinate in 1778, and, like him, had been tried and acquitted. This whole passage, given as it stands in Number 4, is only partly quoted (and mutilated) by Moore, Vol. I., p. 295. Rae follows Moore.

[2] Number 2, March 20.

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lordship; with the 'forward voice' to promulgate vigorous schemes and productive resources in which your fancy is so piquant, while the 'backward voice' might be kept solely for recantation. . . . On the approach of a storm you would always find a shelter under the Monster's gabardine."[1]

It must be owned that these plain words to plain people contain more banter than argument. The trope of the double voice was not lost. He employed it this very year in his "Critic":

> "The father softens—but the governor
> Is fix'd";

while some years later he applied the same figure, in an invective, to Rigby. In another of his papers, however—that for which a rough draft remains—he is more detailed. He strongly censures the previous complaisance of the Whigs: "If ever opposition betrayed the cause of the people, it was then. They should have addressed the people instead of the Throne, and they were rewarded accordingly. . . . It appears now that to change our opinion of the capacity of the minister is a kind of treasonable alliance with the enemy." It would have been better to have adopted "Lord Shelburne's pious fraud" and have given the ministry "a vote of understanding."[2] Other members of the North administration are similarly treated. "There are even Scotchmen," he says, "who do not annex an idea of the purest sincerity to Lord Mansfield's smiles." "When Lord Sandwich explains the astonishing improvement of our navy, a small alloy of incredulity damps the satisfaction which ought to be produced." But the hit at his friend Gibbon's acceptance of place is the best of the piece. Pursuing the paragraph last cited, Sheridan speaks of "the

[1] Number 13, April 28. Moore repeats this passage at greater length and not always accurately. Cf. Vol. I., p. 294.

[2] Sheridan MSS. (the rough draft). This is the paper some of which Moore quotes about Gibbon. *The Englishman* shows Sheridan directly opposed to North, and yet somewhere it has been stated that Sheridan began by favouring him.

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majority who, though they make no scruple in private to acknowledge the total incapacity of ministers, yet in public speak and vote as if they believed them to have every virtue under heaven." "Some gentlemen," he slily adds, "as Mr. Gibbon, for instance—while in private they indulge their opinion pretty freely, will yet, in their zeal for the public good, even condescend to accept a place in order to give a colour to their confidence in the wisdom of the Government."[1] Among the Sheridan papers also survives an ironical fragment which was evidently written a little later, and is facetiously endorsed "Assisted by Gibbon." It is amusing enough to be repeated. It takes the shape of a mock "Proclamation" to be drawn up by "His Majesty's Attorney-General." This manifesto "should set forth," he says, "that all desponding conversation, all doubts in the talents of Administration, is a disloyal doubt in His Majesty's wisdom, and gives a treasonable encouragement to his enemies." "Wherefore we do exhort and enjoin all our subjects to suppress their private opinions for the present. We conjure them to reflect seriously on this most important crisis. . . . Let them consider that we have been years engaged in a war unsuccessfully, that the obstinacy of the rebels is increased by our having boasted year after year that we would subdue them, . . . that we have been a year at war with one branch of the House of Bourbon, and Spain in a most surprising manner has surprised us with a similar declaration, that our fleets are inferior, . . . that Ireland is absolutely ruined, discontented and unprotected. . . . We therefore call on our beloved people for unanimity in this alarming crisis. [Let them], hand and foot, give their support to those men whom with God's blessing I am determined to support in their offices. . . ." A

[1] In his first draft, the sentence does not run quite as well: ". . . They speak and vote as if they believed them to possess every virtue in Nature, and on this principle some gentlemen, as Mr. Gibbon, *e.g.* at the time of indulging their private zeal for the public good, will even condescend to accept a Place, and to give a vote of confidence in their wisdom." By a slip, "of confidence" stands "to their confidence" in the manuscript. The actual King's Proclamation which this mock answer parodied is among the Sheridan Papers.

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note adds, "The patient is in fact dying of the doctor, not of the disease"; which recalls an epigram by Prior:—

> "For cured last night of my disease,
> I died to-day of my physician."

Sheridan's tract on "Absentees" is much more argumentative. In *The Englishman* he had shown how he could speak; in his "Absentees" (which remains unprinted) he demonstrates that he could think. Through his brother and Stratford Canning he had been posted up in the real state of the country for which he always cherished a warm sentiment. Although Moore assigns the essay to 1778, it was probably composed some years earlier, for in 1774 Burke had vehemently pressed the subject. Whatever its date, it may aptly be noticed here as one of the preludes to his politics. He writes as an Irishman examining the evils of the system and the remedies for them. Among the former he discusses the prevailing system of pasturage whereby, to facilitate the collection of rents, the absentee landlord placed "his estates in the hands of as few tenants as possible," and the land was let out "in gross to those who deal only in 'a fatal living crop'—whose produce we are not allowed a market for when manufactured, while we want art, honesty and encouragement to fit it for home consumption. Thus the indolent extravagance of the lord becomes subservient to the interest of a few mercenary graziers." By non-residence, says Sheridan, the absentee foregoes "the prerogative of mercy, of charity. The estated resident is invested with a kind of relieving providence—a power to heal the wounds of undeserved fortune, to break the blows of adverse fortune, and leave chance no power to undo the hopes of honest, persevering industry. There cannot surely be a more happy station than that wherein prosperity and worldly interest are to be best forwarded by an exertion of the most endearing offices of humanity." Absence in this case makes the heart grow colder, as Sheridan shows in a passage oratorically and characteristically sentimental: "The heart, the seat of charity and compassion, is more accessible to the senses than the

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understanding. Many who would be unmoved by any address to the latter, would melt into charity at the eloquent persuasion of silent sorrow. When he *sees* the widow's tears and *hears* the orphan's sigh, everyone will act with a sudden uniform rectitude, because he acts from the divine impulse 'of free love equally to all.'" We are reminded of his Shakespearean citation in "The School for Scandal,"

> "A heart to pity and a hand
> Open as day for melting charity."[1]

But Sheridan returns to argument. He examines in detail the large proportion of absentee trade aggravated by the selfishness of those commercial laws which in 1785 he was violently to assail, and he points out the fatal effects of English interference with Irish manufactures. Exports and imports, he grants, increase daily, but this is no test of prosperity. "The trade of a kingdom should increase," he proceeds, employing an economic fallacy common to his day, "in exact proportion to its luxuries and those of the nations connected with it. Therefore it is no argument to say that, on examining the accounts of Customs fifty years back, they appear to be trebled now, for England by some sudden stroke might lose such a proportion of her trade as would ruin her as a commercial nation, yet the amount of what remained might be tenfold of what she enjoyed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Trade properly speaking is the commutation of the products of each country—this extends itself to the exchange of commodities in which art has fixed a price. Where a nation hath free power to export the works of its industry, the balance in such articles will certainly be in its favour. Thus had we in Ireland power to export our manufactured silks, stuffs and woollens, we should be assured that it would be our interest to import and cultivate their materials. But as this is not the case, the gain of individuals is no proof that the nation is benefited by such commerce. For instance, the exportation of unwrought wool may be very advantageous

[1] Sheridan misquoted this in the early manuscripts as "A tear for pity," etc.

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to the dealer, and through his hands bring money or a beneficial return of commodities into the kingdom; but trace the ill effects of depopulating such tracts of land as are necessary for the support of flocks to supply this branch, and number those who are deprived of support and employment by it, and so become a dead weight on the community—we shall find that the nation in fact will be the poorer for this apparent advantage. This would be remedied were we allowed to export it manufactured, because the husbandman might get his bread as a manufacturer." These luxurious absentees were doubly mischievous. "They not only beggar" their dependants, "but the tribes that live by clothing them." A depopulated country—the country of Goldsmith's poem—was the result of this short-sighted policy. It will be remembered that Sheridan in Johnson's hearing had combated the Club's arguments in favour of emigration from England,[1] and here, with regard to Irish emigration, he takes a similar view. It is an evil caused by the absentee landlord, whom he exhorts in a passage which Moore omits: "Thus let the wealthy who leave their country and estates reflect that *their* single absence is its slightest loss. Let each individual consider that their ruinous attachment to the calls of pleasure and fashion is the most unnatural cruelty to his parent soil. Let him believe that when he forsakes it, he pronounces a sentence of poverty and consequent banishment upon hundreds of his fellow-creatures and fellow-countrymen." He discusses proposed remedies, the one compulsory residence which he scouts as futile without an attached penalty, which "could not possibly be reconciled to the genius of the Constitution"; the other, which he favours, is that of a tax levied on the absentee's property. Even as a fine, he says, it would be justified, and it would only be tantamount to a small drawback on the produce exported to England. It would benefit the poor, whose abject and downtrodden condition he describes in another passage which has also been overlooked. And on the commercial side of the question a further remedy was feasible. Under existing circumstances, he resumes, "the prosperity of her

[1] Cf. *ante*, p. 86.

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trade must be all forced and unnatural; and if, in the absence of its wealthy and estated members, the State already feels all the disadvantages of a Union, it cannot do better than endeavour at a free trade by effecting it in reality."[1] He desired a union of interests. When, however, Pitt foreshadowed his project of union after the upheavals of 1798, Sheridan vehemently opposed it, but he opposed it on the express ground that Grattan's Parliament of 1782, which he regarded as a charter of national freedom, had been a final and congenial settlement. The circumstances had wholly changed, and he was a pronounced Home Ruler. "I must think," he then said, in sentences which deserve record, "that the people in that country who really cherish a love of national liberty, who have dwelt with delight on the recollection of that, till now, auspicious period when independence as it were came upon them by surprise, when the genius of freedom rested upon their island, that the whole people, in short, will come to this second adjustment with a temper which I am afraid will augur not tranquillity but disquietude, not prosperity but calamity; not the suppression of treason, but the increase of plots to multiply and ensanguine its horrors. . . . Is the parliament of England competent to legislate for the parliament of Ireland? Impossible. Every advantage of situation favours the one, the other is unfitted for governing or giving law by every disadvantage of situation, and every dissimilarity of temper and habit. . . . No less an authority than the Lord Chancellor Clare has said that the English parliament is less acquainted with the state of Ireland than any other body of men in the world. How can it be that, in this state of ignorance, the parliament of England is better fitted to legislate for Irishmen than that of Ireland with its experience? . . . Or is the system of ministers . . . to embody their hordes, and, after new plots are hatched, to read the Riot Act to the parliament of Ireland? With respect to intimidation, would it not be to intimidate the Irish, were they told England would not in future be inclined to send troops or to

[1] Sheridan MSS.

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furnish money to Ireland, and that they would be left in a state of nakedness and poverty, at the mercy of those who once distracted the country? . . . The Government of this country will intimidate those whom they cannot persuade, . . . and can they after this be expected to say that the fair opinion of the people of Ireland was collected on this subject? Under all these circumstances, I may assume that I have made out my proposition, that if you effect an union now, no man can say that Ireland was a party to it; if so, separation must follow."[1]

The situation of the early seventies, when two measures of Catholic relief had been granted to Ireland, was very different from that of the late nineties, embittered by revolt and oppression. Sheridan's real point in this essay is that a genuine commercial union between the two countries might help to stay the devastation of the country and root the absentees to the soil, without impairing "the national sense of liberty" common to both islands. He did not trust to union as an antidote, he preferred a tax. "If they say," he affirms in some rough notes for the treatise, that "England makes laws for us and that rich men leaving is no hurt, then they must use us well."[2]

The Englishman and the essay on "Absentees" were political rehearsals, but another and a real "Rehearsal" is more familiar. "The Critic; or, A Tragedy Rehearsed," which appeared on Saturday, October 30, 1779, strangely enough after a performance of "Hamlet,"[3] is the most spontaneous of all his creations; there he was entirely at his

[1] Speeches, Vol. III., pp. 272, 279, 280, "Union of Ireland with Great Britain," January 22, 1799.

[2] Sheridan MSS. Moore's extracts will be found in Vol. I. of his "Life of Sheridan," pp. 280—290. Rae ignores the essay altogether. It should be pointed out (for Moore does not give the passage) that the essay opens with an exaltation of patriotism very different from the sentiments in Sheridan's boyish essay on the theme. "On our coming into the world we contract a debt to our country which we can never discharge."

[3] Cf. Woodfall's *Public Advertiser* under date.

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ease and in his element. The manuscript shows that it ran from a flowing pen, and for sheer fun and arch parody of conventional stageland it has never been equalled. The Duchess of Devonshire, who was present at its first performance, wrote that it was the most laughable farce that she had ever seen; and the laughter of the minute has lasted, though it is now far too infrequently heard. Who does not remember its good things, its retorts on his critics, its ridicule of solemn self-importance, and its incomparable thrusts at windy tragedies?

> "The Spanish fleet thou canst not see—because
> It is not yet in sight,"

is now a proverb. So, with much else, is the whole philosophy of Puffdom, and the "wonderful unanimity" which heralds that immortal prayer of the patriots who are admonished to walk out kneeling, instead of "springing off with a glance at the pit":—

> "Behold, thy votaries submissive beg
> That thou wilt deign to grant them all they ask;
> Assist them to accomplish all their ends,
> And sanctify whatever means they use
> To gain them."

Tilburina is the very Ophelia of extravaganza:—

> "Is this a grasshopper?—Ha! no, it is my
> Whiskerandos—you shall not keep him—
> I know you have him in your pocket—
> An oyster may be crossed in love!—Who says
> A whale's a bird?—Ha! did you call, my love?—
> He's here! he's there!—He's everywhere!
> Ah me! he's nowhere."

And Whiskerandos's death finds utterance in the best *cæsura* in the language:—

> "O cursèd parry!—that last thrust in tierce
> Was fatal!—Captain, thou hast fencèd well!
> And Whiskerandos quits this bustling scene
> For all eter—
> BEEF-EATER: Nity—he would have added, but stern death
> Cut short his being and the noun at once,"

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a *cæsura* which needed so much practice that the expiring hero refused to "stay dying here all night." [1]

Other pieces there are as good in mock gravity but less familiar: the "fate" that

> "Like a clipped guinea trembles in the scale,"

and the Spaniard's farewell to misgiving:—

> "Art thou then true?—Begone cares, doubts and fears,
> I make you all a present to the winds,
> And if the winds reject you—try the waves."

But perhaps the episode of the long-lost son, where "relationship, like murder, will out"—a lineal ancestor of "Box and Cox"—is the happiest indictment of the melodrama:—

> "LADY: How loudly nature whispers to my heart!
> Had he no other name?
> SON: I've seen a bill
> Of his signed Tomkins, creditor.
> JUSTICE: This does indeed confirm each circumstance
> The gipsy told! Prepare—
> SON: I do.
> JUSTICE: No orphan, nor without a friend, art thou—
> I am thy father; here's thy mother; there
> Thy uncle—this thy first cousin, and those
> Are all your near relations."

Fooling as excellent, not to multiply examples, occurs in Sir Christopher's audience-enlightening colloquy with Sir Walter:—

> "SIR W.: Philip, you know, is proud Iberia's King.
> SIR C.: He is.
> SIR W.: His subjects in base bigotry
> And Catholic oppression held;—while we,
> You know, the Protestant persuasion hold.
> SIR C.: We do.
> SIR W.: You know, beside, his boasted armament,
> The famed Armada by the Pope baptised,
> With purpose to invade these realms—
> SIR C.: Is sailed.

[1] It is so stated in an interesting contemporary edition of the play with annotations in the writer's possession.

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SIR W.: Our last advices so report,
While the Iberian admiral's chief hope,
His darling son—
SIR C.: Ferolo Whiskerandos hight—
SIR W.: The same—by chance a prisoner hath been ta'en,
And in this fort of Tilbury—
SIR C.: Is now
Confined—'tis true, and oft from yon tall turret's top
I've marked the youthful Spaniard's haughty mien—
Unconquered, though in chains.
SIR W.: You also know—"

The topical allusions in the farce deserve a notice which has been neglected. "Don Whiskerandos" was Sheridan's nickname for the elegant and haughty John James Hamilton, afterwards Marquis of Abercorn. Puff's direction of "the soliloquy always to the pit, if you please," was a hit at John Kemble. The "first four acts" of Puff's tragedy point to an actual fact. Three years after "The Critic" appeared, Lord Sackville wrote to Wraxall that Cumberland, then a guest at Drayton, had read to him the "first four acts of a new sort of tragedy in familiar dialogue instead of blank verse for which, I conclude, he will be abused till he has a severe attack of the bile." In Puff's libretto of the "Spanish Armada" Sheridan does not laugh at Cumberland alone. Several of its worst tirades are drawn bodily from Home's "Douglas," while one of its best is a blasphemy on Milton's "Lycidas." And the trope of the "stolen children" which will be noticed presently, was repeated by Sheridan in a speech on Pitt's declaratory India Bill of 1788, which he averred to be "nothing more than a bad plagiarism from Mr. Fox's; disfigured, indeed, as gipsies do stolen children, in order to make them pass for their own."[1]

The idea of "The Critic," that germinated many years

[1] So runs an account given in "Sheridaniana," though this wording is not to be found in the speeches as meagrely reported. For the allusions to Hamilton and Cumberland cf. Wraxall's "Memoirs," Vol. III., p. 388; Vol. IV., p. 216. Two of the pieces drawn from Howe's "Douglas," are those about "Cupid's baby woes," and "how loudly Nature whispers to my heart."

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earlier in "Ixion," is of course derived from George, Duke of Buckingham's old play "The Rehearsal," which supplied a point or so for Sheridan's.[1] But because Raleigh's entry at the fag-end of his talk with Hatton, and Burleigh's wise shake of the head were suggested by "The Rehearsal," we are not to suppose that "The Critic" is a vamped-up repetition; still less that its character of the feeble "Bayes" bears much resemblance to that of the unconscionable "Puff." Buckingham's farce is long and cumbersome; it appealed to other manners and satirised the rhymed grandiloquence of far different pieces, as Richard Fitzpatrick has emphasised in his Prologue.[2] It gives none of that modern impression which distinguishes Sheridan, and on this account "The Rehearsal" has been dead for a century and a half, while "The Critic" still claims to live. Nor

[1] As, for example, in the dialogue between "the two Kings of Brentford":

"To conclude—

"What, before he begins!—

"No, sir, you must know they had been talking of this a pretty while without,"

and in that between the four patriots who "meet and shake their heads":

"These patriots seem to equal the greatest politicians in their silence—

"Sir, what they think now cannot be spoken, but you may conjecture a great deal from their shaking their heads."

In the conversation, too, between the Physician and Gentleman-usher the sort of refinement which makes them argue as to whether they can be heard whispering is in the nature of some of Sheridan's strokes. It should be added with regard to the first instance that in the manuscript "Raleigh" was originally addressed as "Leicester," and the whole passage was afterwards much improved. "The Rehearsal" had been revived by Garrick in 1761.

[2] "In those gay days of wickedness in wit,
When Villiers criticised what Dryden writ,
The Tragic Queen, to please a tasteless crowd,
Had learn'd to bellow, rant, and roar so loud,
That frighten'd Nature, her best friend before,
The blustering beldam's company forswore.
* * * * *
The frantic hero's wild delirium past,
Now insipidity succeeds bombast," etc.

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was "The Rehearsal" the sole satire of its kind. Fielding's "Pasquin" is another; but "The Critic," which, like all Sheridan's dialogue, reads as brilliantly as it acts, has superseded them both. It is truly original, though one passage occurs which is an unblushing transference from Churchill's "Rosciad," and amusingly enough it occurs where the dialogue concerns plagiarism :—

"SIR FRETFUL: Besides—I can tell you it is not always so safe to leave a play in the hands of those who write themselves.
SNEER: What, they may steal from them, hey, my dear Plagiary?
SIR F.: Steal!—to be sure they may; and, egad, serve your best thoughts as gipsies do stolen children, disfigure them to make 'em pass for your own."

Churchill had written in his "Apology" for the hack who "still pilfers wretched plans, and makes them worse" :—

"Like gipsies, lest the stolen brat be known,
Defacing first, then claiming as his own,"

and Sheridan, in echoing the lines, tested the memory of his detractors. The conclusion, too, of Sir Fretful's forebodings is far too good to let pass :—

"SNEER: But your present work is a sacrifice to Melpomene, and *he*, you know, never—
SIR F.: That's no security; a dexterous plagiarist may do anything. Why, sir, for aught I know he might take out some of the best things in my tragedy and put them into his own comedy.
SNEER: That might be done, I dare be sworn.
SIR F.: And then if such a person gives you the least hint or assistance, he is devilish apt to take the merit of the whole—
DANGLE: If it succeeds.
SIR F.: Aye, but with regard to this piece, I think I can hit that gentleman, for I can safely swear he never read it.
SNEER: I'll tell you how you may hurt him more.
SIR F.: How?
SNEER: Swear he wrote it."

As for the names, a "Puff" appears in one of Foote's comedies, and for the benefit of Sir Fretful's kindred it may be

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added that a "Mr. Sneer" is also mentioned in Congreve's "Double Dealer."[1]

How closely Sir Fretful mirrors Sheridan's view of Cumberland is confirmed by an erasure in his first draft for the last portion of the second scene in the play. It stood originally:—

"I believe," says Dangle, "we were a little too free with Sir Fretful, tho' he is my particular friend." "I agree with you, Dangle," replies Sneer, "that unnecessarily to mortify the vanity of a disappointed author is a cruelty which mere dulness never can deserve, but when a base malignity stands in the place of literary ambition, the aggressor deserves neither quarter nor pity." To which Dangle answers as in the revised play, "That's true, egad, tho' he is *my* friend."

Sheridan harboured no rancour against the carping Cumberland. He softened "a disappointed author," aimed at the veteran's envy, into the vagueness of "any writer," while he also improved the passage by some verbal corrections. The long-winded pomposity of Cumberland and his compositions is hit off to the life. And when Sir Fretful promises to read the "first four acts" of a play he is rightly reminded that "the watch is the best critic."

Not nearly so many differences exist between the autograph manuscript and the received version as occurred in the case of "The School for Scandal." And a few material improvements are manifest. "No scandal about the queen" was heightened by adding "Elizabeth"; the "Temple of Hygeia" (alluding to Dr. Graham's latest nostrum) was changed from "the salutary temple," and in the long-lost son's recital, the name of "Jenkins" characteristically replaced "Wilkins." But these, and some repolishing of style, exhaust the list of alterations. The bit where Puff describes his profits by advertising calamity is dashed off at speed; so is that about "something like it in 'Othello'" and the whole episode of Tilburina. The part of her

[1] Act III., Sc. X., "Lord and Lady Froth."

"LORD F.: . . . Won't you join with us? We were laughing at my lady Whifler and Mr. Sneer.

"LADY F.: Ay, my dear—were you? O filthy Mr. Sneer!"

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THOMAS KING

(Sometime Manager at Drury Lane Theatre),

the original impersonator of Sir Peter Teazle, and of Puff in the 'Critic,'

from an old engraving.

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"Confidante" is inserted on small paper and written like a hurried letter, while the *finale* of the Thames and his "Banks" flows in evident haste and without any erasures. On the reverse side of the sheet which contains the scene where Tilburina enters "stark mad in white satin," the following instructions are scribbled:—"Let Chaplin know he is to do the Player King to-morrow. What's to be done about sending the copy to the Licenser? It's all ready as soon as I have got it. Who must be put in the farce in Parker's room? Ask if Mr. Davies must be sent to get ready in Lodovico in 'Othello' if Parker should not be able to play on Monday. Get the copy signed by Mrs. Sheridan for the Licence." At the beginning, too, Sheridan has scrawled (about the playbill), "Make the principal tragedians red: it's a black bill. Put Wright's name in. He does the Beefeater. I must have all the chorus at dinner, &c., to-morrow at five. R. B. S. You need not call Parsons. Scratch out Grove."[1]

"The Critic" appeared some quarter of a year after Spain had declared war on England and begun the blockade of Gibraltar. Sheridan was blamed for making merry over the crisis and utilising the Spanish danger by mock-heroics on the Armada. But in the main his critics were glad to share his laughter. Candid friends of course wrote newspaper letters pointing out his lapses, excavating his quotations, and reforming his scenes. One of them compares him to "an experienced watchmaker who, after examining the component parts, selects only the mathematically exact." But even when Sheridan's originality was questioned, his taste was approved. The farce proved a huge success and once more filled the coffers of Drury Lane. It remained unprinted till 1781, when Wilkie published it with its author's sanction and a graceful dedication to Mrs. Greville, the arbitress of literary taste and the mother of Mrs. Crewe.[2] Edition followed edition. The Dublin one

[1] Parsons acted Plagiary, King, Puff, Dodd, Dangle; and Palmer, Sneer. Mrs. Hopkins took the part of Mrs. Dangle, Miss Pope that of Tilburina, and a Mrs. Bradshaw that of the "Confidante."

[2] This was not the sole occasion. In 1819 the then Lord Crewe told Moore

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appeared in 1785, and for some eighty years fresh imprints continued. The farce has become part of our literature.

"The Critic" opens out the whole field of Criticism. Sheridan's own views of its true function are sketched in a fragment among his papers: " . . . The decrees of Criticism receive face from mildness, and grace from modesty. A just opinion of a work may be conveyed to the public without being accompanied by a bitter invective. When we perceive a critic censuring while he appears loth to censure, the poison he distils on the heart of the author is softened by the balm with which it is mingled."

Save the subsequent paraphrases of "The Stranger" and "Pizarro," and (in 1794) "The Glorious First of June"—a musical medley—no more acted pieces issued from his pen. Another play of this period—"The Camp," an operetta by Tickell—was misascribed to Sheridan by contemporaries and published as his in Leigh Hunt's collection of his plays. It appeared in 1778 and also handled the preparations for war, but it only owed revising touches to Sheridan, and a copy of the play in the author's handwriting, with Sheridan's corrections, is to be found among his papers.[1] Tickell's "Carnival of Venice," however, which made a mark in 1781, comprised some songs actually written by Sheridan.[2] For years he worked at other dramatic miscellanies which, under the stress of St. Stephen's and the troubles of Drury Lane, never came into being. Among the Sheridan manuscripts are some scenes of an Italian tragedy quite beyond the scope of the satirist's powers,[3] and he composed (probably about the time of his

that he "had a letter from Sheridan to her prefixed as a sort of dedication to some MS. book of poems." Cf. Moore's "Journal," Vol. II., p. 318.

[1] The amendments are mostly excisions, and re-castings of styles. In one part about "an eye like the King of Prussia's," Sheridan inserted "a blood-spill eye."

[2] Cf. Mr. Crouch's "Memoirs," Vol. I., pp. 127 *et seq.*, *v. ante*, pp. 442, 443. "The Glorious First of June," written by Sheridan and Cobb, was given for the benefit of the survivors of the battle on July 2, 1794, before a brilliant audience, and netted £1,300. Cf. contemporary journals, and see *post*, "Bibliography," in Vol. II.

[3] In the British Museum MSS. is also another historical drama attributed to him, "Renaud D'Asti."

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"King Arthur") a musical afterpiece, from which a melancholy song has already been presented to the reader.[1] But his projected comedy on "Affectation," the jottings for which fill some exceptionally neat pages of a small copy-book, makes us regret that so congenial a scheme and subject never reached maturity. Some of these notes have already been cited in passing. A few more will certainly bear repetition :—

Of an affected spendthrift :—

"He regulates every action by a love of fashion, will grant annuities though he does not want money, appear to intrigue, though constant, . . . wants to lose, but by ill luck wins five thousand pounds."

Of an affected intriguer :—

"A plan of public flirtation—not to get beyond a profile" [*i.e.*, a silhouette as it was then called in England].

"A man intriguing only for the reputation of it. To his confidential servant: 'Who am I in love with now? . . . Remember, to-morrow the first thing you do, to put me in love with Mrs. C.'

"An old man who affects intrigue and writes his own reproaches to the *Morning Post*, trying to scandalise himself into the reputation of appearing young, as if he could obscure his age by blotting his character."

Of an affected invalid :—

"'Shall I be ill to-day?—Shall I be nervous?'—'Your La'ship was nervous yesterday.'—'Was I? Then I'll have a cold—I haven't had a cold this fortnight—a cold is becoming. No—I'll not have a cough, that's fatiguing—I'll be quite well.'—'You become sickness, your La'ship always looks vastly well when you're ill. . . .'"

Of an apoplectic figure :—

"A fat woman trundling into a room on castors—in sitting can only lean against her chair—rings on her fingers, and her fat arms strangled with bracelets that belt them like corded brawn— . . . with a most apoplectic ogle—you wish to draw her out, as you would an opera-glass."

And this must surely characterise Windham :—

"An irresolute arguer to whom it is a great misfortune that there are not three sides to a question—a libertine in argument: conviction, like enjoyment, palls him, and his rakish understanding is soon satiated with truth—more capable of being faithful to a paradox."

[1] "Melancholy, friend to Grief" (Sheridan MSS. and Add. MS. 25937). The play, it would seem, was to be called "The Governor." Cf. *ante*, p. 7.

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The promise of this comedy was often dangled before the public, and in 1781 the *Morning Post* announced that "Mr. Sheridan has made considerable progress in his new comedy of 'Affectation,' which will succeed the opera of Mr. Tickell, the parts of which are already distributed."[1]

Fugitive verses, patchwork pantomimes (like "Robinson Crusoe," "Harlequin Hurly-burly" and, long afterwards, "The Forty Thieves"), finishing touches to plays by other hands, adaptations and impromptus employed him in the future, but with the dancing mirth of "The Critic" he practically bade farewell to literature.[2]

There can be small doubt that in the technicalities of his work he owed much to Garrick's experience, and in the preceding January Garrick died. At the splendid obsequies in Westminster Abbey which assembled most "of light and leading," as Burke phrased it, to honour the first who had dignified the stage, Sheridan acted as chief mourner.[3] Garrick had been laid in state at Adelphi Terrace, and a concourse so vast as to be dangerous took its last glimpse of a favourite who had become almost a national institution. The site of Garrick's resting place, hard by the bust of Shakespeare, caused Burke to say in Sheridan's hearing that the national bard himself seemed to dictate its fitness. This lingered in Sheridan's mind and suggested two lines of the Monody which he was called on to indite.[4] How little could he have foreseen that in that very spot, more than thirty-seven years onwards, his own remains would be lowered!

Sheridan's "Verses to the Memory of Garrick," dedicated to Lady Spencer, recited at Drury Lane in February by Mrs. Yates as the Tragic Muse, and afterwards set to music by Linley,

[1] *Morning Post* for November 6, 1781; cf. Eg. MS. 1975, f. 141.

[2] "Robinson Crusoe" appeared in 1781, "Hurly-burly" in 1786, and "The Forty Thieves" in 1804.

[3] Cf. the account of the funeral in Woodfall's *Public Advertiser*.

[4] "The graced respect that claimed them to the last,
While Shakespeare's image from its hallowed base
Seemed to prescribe the grave, and point the place."

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is a polished performance, but it cannot rank among his highest efforts. It falls much below the monody which Byron, who praised it, composed on its author. It is unimbued with strong personal feeling, nor in any part of it does it, so to speak, give itself away. It is in truth not so much an elegy on the life of a friend, as an epilogue to the play of Garrick's fame. All the elements of Sheridan's prologues and epilogues characterise it: finish, fancy, grace, ingenuity, condensation.

"If dying excellence deserves a tear,
If fond remembrance still is cherished here,
Can we persist to bid your sorrows flow
For fabled sufferers and delusive woe?
Or with quaint smiles dismiss the plaintive strain,
Point the quick jest—indulge the comic vein—
Ere yet to buried Roscius we assign
One kind regret—one tributary line?
His fame requires we act a tenderer part:
His memory claims the tear you gave his art.

* * * * *

The grace of action, the adapted mien
Faithful as Nature to the varied scene;
Th' expressive glance—whose subtle comment draws
Entranced attention and a mute applause;
Gesture that marks, with force and feeling fraught,
A sense in silence, and a will in thought;
Harmonious speech, whose pure and liquid tone
Gives voice a music scarce confessed its own,
As light from gems assumes a brighter ray,
And, clothed with orient hues, transcends the day!
Passion's wild break—and frown that awes the sense,
And every charm of gentle eloquence,
All perishable! . . . "

The close affords full rein to Sheridan's sentiment:—

"And O! by every charm his art essayed
To soothe your cares, by every grief allayed!
By the hushed wonder which his accents drew!
By his last parting tear, repaid by you!
By all those thoughts which many a distant night
Shall mark his memory with a sad delight!
Still in your hearts' dear record bear his name;
Cherish the keen regret that lifts his fame.

* * * * *

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O'er his graced urn shall bloom a deathless wreath
Whose blossomed sweets shall deck the mask beneath.
For there,—when Sculpture's votive toil shall rear
The due memorial of a loss so dear—
O loveliest mourner, gentle Muse! be thine
The pleasing woe to guard the laurell'd shrine.
As Fancy, oft by Superstition led
To roam the mansions of the sainted dead,
Has view'd by shadowy eve's unfaithful gloom
A weeping cherub on a martyr's tomb—
So thou, sweet Muse, hang o'er his sculptured bier,
With patient woe, that loves the lingering tear;
With thoughts that mourn, nor yet desire relief;
With meek regret, and fond enduring grief;
With looks that speak—'He never shall return!'
Chilling thy tender bosom, clasp his urn;
And with soft sighs disperse th' irreverent dust
Which Time may strew upon his sacred bust."[1]

It should be added that he always revered Garrick's memory, and, when the theatre was rebuilt in 1794, preserved a plank on which Roscius had trod, and added it to the newly constructed stage.

Sheridan now steadily fixed his gaze on St. Stephen's. A general election during the autumn of 1780 afforded him the chance so long desired. Two seats were suggested, both of them in the West of England. Some noble friends (perhaps Lords Coventry and Harrington) wished him to contest Bolingbroke's first borough—Wootton Bassett, a seat intended for Sheridan in 1812, when the tie with Stafford had been severed: Sheridan visited the place, but found his prospects hopeless. Honiton was suggested, and Ozias Humphry, the Linleys' artistic admirer, exerted his local influence to the utmost. Armed with his enthusiastic letters, Sheridan visited the town, which however preferred a wealthy Scotsman.[2] The Duchess

[1] This Monody ran to at least two editions in 1779, both illustrated by De Loutherbourg with an engraving of the Muse by the urn. In 1780 it was published in Dublin as "A Monody on the Death of Mr. Garrick."

[2] Watkins (Vol. I., pp. 251—254) gives the correspondence between "a friend," an "eminent artist," and Sheridan regarding the candidature for Honiton. The "friend" and the "artist" of his text evidently means

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of Devonshire and the Spencer family then came to his rescue. At Devonshire House (on the eve of starting for Wootton Bassett), Sheridan had met Lady Cork, who offered him an introduction to her brother, John Monckton, for some time already one of the two members for Stafford. The Whig interest would be well served if young Sheridan were his colleague. Lord Spencer controlled much, and the Crewes some, of that borough's interest. So Sheridan went down under the combined auspices of the Moncktons, Devonshires, and Spencers, and was well received, as his grateful letter to the Duchess, a week after his election, implies.[1] On September 12,

Humphry, who was a native of the place. One of the letters cited by Watkins is dated September 3, only nine days before Sheridan's return for Stafford. In the first letter Sheridan writes after instructions, "Puff me too." Humphry describes Sheridan as "a particular friend of Mr. Charles Fox, Mr. Fitzpatrick, and all the first and most considerable characters in the kingdom; himself of the most shining talents and independent principles." Sheridan, too, writes concerning his predecessor, Younge, "They are damned fellows if they think to mend themselves by chusing a Scotchman, and a Mac too." Sir George Younge seems then to have been paramount at Honiton and to have retired in favour of the "Mac."

[1] Creevey alleges that it was through Lady Cork that Sheridan was returned ("Creevey Papers," Vol. I., p. 56). Lady Cork, however, can only have been a subsidiary, and Sheridan's true debt was to the Devonshires and Spencers. The following is his letter to the Duchess:

"LONDON, Sept. 19, 1780. Madam, I am entirely at a loss how to thank Your Grace for the Honor and Service which Your Grace's condescending to interest yourself in my election at Stafford has been to me. Having sent the Recommendation which I had the Honor to receive from Lady Spencer to his Lordship's Agent, I profited by the Permission allowed to me to make use of your Grace's Letter *as my first* and best introduction to Lord Spencer's Interest in the Town. I assure Your Grace that I found good effects from it even out of the circle of influence which Lord Spencer's Property and Character so justly maintain in Stafford. It is no Flattery to say that the Duchess of Devonshire's name commands an implicit admiration whenever it is mentioned, and I found some that had opportunities of often seeing and of hearing more of your Grace, who were so proud of the distinction as to require no other motive to support anyone who appear'd honor'd with Your Grace's commendation. Having written to Lady Spencer, I need not intrude on Your Grace to express how highly obliged I feel to Lord Spencer—and I have avoided asking Mr. Fox to

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after endless beer-drinking, swearing in freemen, buffeting, junketing, processions, and the expenditure of one thousand pounds,[1] Richard Brinsley Sheridan was duly returned for the city, which he represented without a break for twenty-six years. In days to come he is said often to have stayed there with his friend William Horton at Chetwynd House in Greengate, and number six, Eastgate Street, is still pointed out as his frequent abode during election contests.[2] Even after the connection unhappily ended, his constituents presented him with a massive silver cup, inscribed with a grateful record, and this is still treasured at Frampton Court.

Already election stories abounded. Sheridan's raillery, it was said, converted hostile strangers in stage-coaches. He humoured the crowd, and laughed prejudice out of court. But a much later incident of the hustings—probably when Paull, the tailor's son, opposed him at Westminster—has never been recorded, and may illustrate his good-humour now, though it happened long afterwards. "I should like to dash that fellow's brains out," coarsely exclaimed the vituperator. Sheridan waited his turn and then quietly observed: "You have heard the candidate's amiable desire. I cordially agree, and have only one request to submit. Let him be very careful when he performs his operation. Let him pick up my brains, for he needs them sadly."[3]

thank Your Grace on my account, because I am perhaps even unfairly ambitious to owe all the Gratitude myself."

Devonshire House MSS., transcribed by the late Mr. Strong in the *Anglo-Saxon Review* for September, 1899, p. 46, and, partly, by Rae, Vol. I., pp. 354, 355.

[1] According to "Public Characters of 1779," this was raised by subscription, and one of the subscribers "rewarded with an opera-share." Cf. Watkins, Vol. I., p. 255.

[2] "Handbook to Stafford." Horton lived long enough to be a friend of Sheridan's son when, in his turn, he stood (though in vain) for the constituency. The writer has seen a correspondence between them. Another family with whom Sheridan stayed at Stafford was the Wrights.

[3] From information kindly given by Mrs. Ford, the nonagenarian widow of the author of the "Spanish Handbook," whose father, Sir Richard, was Sheridan's friend.

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A new vista lay before him. He had won golden opinions from all conditions of people, and who could set a limit to the possibilities of his future? The King's friends and their chief, North, were now tottering; Rockingham was titular head of the Whig party, and Burke, already a veteran, did the thinking for Rockingham. Pitt as yet was an unknown quantity; among the younger men Charles Fox stood pre-eminent, but Fox lacked industry. Sheridan may well have thought himself cast for a leading part in an assembly swayed by rhetoric and management of men. Years later, he assured Creevey that after the poll was declared, he stole away from dinner and walked alone dreaming rapturously of the future. The die was cast.[1]

[1] Cf. Creevey, Vol. I., p. 56. He said that this was the happiest moment of his life.

THE END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

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APPENDIX

TO

THE FIRST VOLUME.

A.

(1) SHERIDAN'S "ODE TO SCANDAL."[1]

Illustrated by (2) *Verses on "Poor Lucy," transcribed from Sheridan's Original Autograph, among the Sheridan Manuscripts.*

O THOU, whose all-consoling power
Can calm each female breast,
Whose touch in spleen's most vapourish hour
Can soothe our cares to rest,
Thee, I invoke, great Genius hear!
Pity a lady's sighs;
Unless thy kind relief be near,
Poor [poor?] Colvilia[2] dies.
Haste thee then, and with thee bring
Many a little venomed sting,
Many a tale that no one knows
Or shall be nameless, Belles and Beaux,
Just imported curtain lectures,
Winks and nods and shrewd conjectures,
Unknown marriages, some twenty,
Private child-bed linen plenty;
And horns just fitted to some prophet's head,
And certain powdered coats, and certain tumbled beds.

[1] "An Ode to Scandal, to which are added stanzas on Fire by the late R. B. Sheridan. London. Printed for W. Wright, 46 Fleet Street. 1819." Reasons have already been given in the text for holding this composition to be genuine. With its episode of "Poor Nancy" should be compared a rough set of verses by Sheridan, which I have added at the end of the transcript.

[2] Perhaps a sister of Robert Colville (b. 1763, d. 1796), who was one of the handsomest men of his time and married the beautiful Miss Asgill. The Asgills were close friends of Sheridan, who used to say that he had "invented" Lady Asgill's beauty.

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AN "ODE TO SCANDAL"

Teach me, powerful Genius, teach,
Thine own mysterious art,
Safe from retaliation's reach
To throw Detraction's[1] dart.
So shall my hand an altar raise
Sacred to thy transcendent praise,
And daily with assiduous care
Some grateful sacrifice prepare.
The first informations
Of lost reputations
As offerings to thee I'll consign,
And the earliest news
Of surprised *billets doux*
Shall constant be served at thy shrine.
Intrigues by the score
Never heard of before,
Shall the sacrifice daily augment,
And by each Morning Post
Some favourite toast,
A victim to thee, shall be sent.
Heavens! methinks I see thy train
Lightly tripping o'er the plain;
All the alphabet I view
Stepping forward two by two—
Hush! for as they coupled walk,
Sure I hear the letters talk.
Though slowly whispering, half they smother
The well-concerted tales they tell of one another.
"Lord! who'd have thought our cousin D.
Could think of marrying Mrs. E.?
True I don't like such things to tell;
But, faith, I pity Mrs. L.,
And, was I her, the bride to vex,
I would intrigue with Mr. X.
But they do say that Charlotte U.
With Fanny M. and we know who
Occasion'd all, for you must know
They set their caps at Mr. O.,
And as he courted Mrs. E.,
They thought if she'd have cousin D.,
That things might be by Colonel A.
Just brought about in their own way."[2]

[1] A note to the printed copy says that Sheridan changed this in his own writing from "Destruction."

[2] Compare with this the first crayon of a "Pump Room Scene" which Sheridan made at Bath for "The School for Scandal" (Moore, Vol. I.,

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See yonder in the thickest throng,
Designing Envy stalks along
By co-malicious Laughter;
Fiction and Cunning swell her train,
While stretching far behind—in vain
Poor Truth comes panting after!
Now, now indeed I burn with sacred fires,
'Tis Scandal's self that every thought inspires!
I feel, all-potent Genius, now I feel
Thy working magic through each artery steal;
Each moment to my prying eyes
Some fresh disfigured beauties rise!
Each moment I perceive some flaw
That e'en ill-nature never saw.
But hush! some airy whisperer hints
In accents wisely faint,
Divine Cleora rather squints,[1]
Maria uses paint;
That though some fops of Celia prate,
Yet be not hers the praise,
For if she should be passing straight,
Hem! she may thank her stays.
Each fool of Delia's figure talks,
And celebrates her fame,
But for my part, where'er she walks
I vow I think she's lame.
And see Madam Harriet toss her head;
Lawk! how the creature stares!
Well, well, thank Heavens, it can't be said
I give myself such airs.
But soft!—what figure's this I now see come,
Whose awful form strikes even Scandal dumb?
Ah me! the blood forsakes my trembling cheek
While sternly thus, methinks, I hear her speak:
"Peace, snarling woman, peace,
'Tis Candour bids thee cease,
Candour, at whose insulted name,
Even *thy* face should burn with shame.
Too long I've silent seen
The venom of thy spleen,

p. 211): "Friendly caution in the newspapers"—"It is whispered . . . ." "To be sure they do say"—"I hate to repeat all I hear," etc.

[1] Compare the new passage introduced *ante*, p. 573, where part of a dialogue between Joseph and Lady Teazle, afterwards erased by Sheridan, is given.

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Too long with secret pain
Beheld black Scandal's reign;
But now, with indignation stung,
Justice demands my willing tongue,
And bids me drag the lurking fiend to sight
And hold the deeds of darkness up to light.—
Look on this prospect, and if e'er thy brow
Can feel compunction's sickening influence—now—
Mark yonder weeping maid
Sadly deserted laid
Beside that mournful willow.
There every day in silent woe
She bids her tears incessant flow,
And every night forlornly pining,
Mute on her lily hand reclining,
Bedews her waking pillow.
Sweet girl, she was once most enchantingly gay,
Each youth owned her charms and acknowledged their sway.
No arts did she use to acquire every grace,
'Twas good humour alone that enlivened her face.—
Her pureness had leave in her actions to speak,
The spirit of youth gave the blush to her cheek;
And her looks uninstructed her thoughts would impart,
For her eyes only flashed from the warmth of her heart.
Herself undesigning, no scheme she suspected;
Ne'er dreaming of ambush, defence she neglected;
With the youth that she loved, at the moon's silver hour
In confidence tender she stole to the bower.
There he hoped his designs to have basely obtain'd,
But she spurned at the insult her virtue sustain'd:
And he, in revenge for his baffled endeavour,
Gave a hint—'twas enough—she was ruined for ever.
A thousand kind females the story augmented,
Each day grinding Envy additions invented,
Till insatiate Malice had gained all her ends,
Had robbed her of character, happiness, friends.
And now, poor maid, alone,
Shunn'd as a pest, she makes her moan,
And in unheard despair,
Yields, all resigned, to soul-consuming care;
And oftentimes her maddening brain
Turns with its feverish weight of pain,
And then a thousand childish things
The pretty mad one rudely sings!
Or mute on the pathway she gazes
And weeps as she scatters her daisies!

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Or else in a strain more distractedly loud
She chaunts the sad thoughts of her fancy!
And shivers and sings of her cold shroud,
Alas! alas! poor Nancy.[1]
Nay, weep not now, 'tis now too late—
Thy friendship might have stopped her fate.
Rather now hide thy head for conscious shame,
Thy tongue too blabbed the lie that damned her fame.
Such are the triumphs Scandal claims,
Triumphs derived from ruined names;
Such as to generous minds unknown,
And honest minds would blush to own.
Nor think, vain woman, while you sneer
At others' faults, that you are clear.
No—turn your back—you undergo
The malice you to others show,
And soon by some malicious tale o'erthrown,
Like Nancy, fall, unpitied and unknown.
Oh! then, ye blooming fair, attend,
And take kind CANDOUR for your friend,
Nor forfeit for a mean delight
That power o'er man that's yours by right.
To woman every charm was given,
Designed by an indulgent Heaven
To soften care;
For ye were formed to bless mankind,
To harmonize and soothe the mind!
Indeed, indeed ye were.
But when from those sweet lips we hear
Ill Nature's whisper, Envy's sneer,
Your power that moment dies!
Each coxcomb makes your name his sport,
And fools when angry will retort
What men of sense despise.
Leave then such vain disputes to these,
And take a nobler road to please;
Let Candour guide your sway.
So shall you daily conquests gain,
And captives, happy in your chain,
Be pleased to own your sway."

[*Here follows a facsimile of R. B. Sheridan's signature.*]

[1] Compare with these the verses on "Poor Lucy," next transcribed.

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VERSES ON "POOR LUCY"

[*To such as may doubt the style and pathos of the "Poor Nancy" episode may be commended the following rough draft* (*which Sheridan after his manner would have polished and amended*) *of verses on "Poor Lucy," which the writer found among the Sheridan Papers.*]

---

(2) STRETCHED on her bed poor Lucy lay
(Her death-bed well she knew it was).
Her lip was cold as dew-bath'd clay,
But Guilt and Folly were the Cause.

No tears of Sorrow did there flow,
No sighs she heav'd, nor holy prayer.
Disease had laid her on that bed of woe,
And Poverty had stript her there.

Ah! Lucy, turn not back thy Eye,
Nor recollect a former day.
'Twill tear thy heart with misery
To think how different once you lay,

When 'neath your own dear Father's shed
(That father now to ruin driv'n)
With Nancy, partner of your bed,
You turned your rosy cheek to Heaven.

Then stirr'd you with the morning bird,
While on his knees the old man fell,
Till *thy* voice told, his prayers were heard—
For Lucy, his delight, was well.—

Alas! what change, what woe is here!
Can this be Lucy, once so gay,
Without a strength to shed a tear
Or Friend to wipe that tear away?

A tatter'd Robe half propt her head,
Her look was sullen, dark despair.
The chill blast whistled around her head,
And to that blast her limbs were bare.

At length a Dawn of Reason came,
And came but to afflict her more.
The dying taper of Wild Flame
Flam'd once, and sank to rise no more.

"O God," she cried, in accents low,
"Since I must give my guilty breath,
Since I have filled my sum of woe,
Why linger thus a wretched Death?

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"But O! is that my Father's Voice
I hear, and Sylvio's accents too?
O Death, come let me once rejoice,
And tear poor Lucy from their view."

It was her Father's Voice she heard,
And honest Sylvio too was come,
Who, once misled by Friendship, err'd
For him who caus'd poor Lucy's doom.

The old man totter'd to the Bed
With broken sobs and accents wild.
He knelt—he rais'd poor Lucy's Head:
He kiss'd her, and he call'd her child.

* * * *

"Old man," said Lucy, "for I ne'er
Will call thee Father unforgiven,
Raise not thy hands to empty air,
For Lucy has no friend in Heaven.

"Since first I left thy tender Arms,
I've been forsook by all above;
And soon I lost those guilty charms,
Which made me quit my God for Love.

"Here am I now despis'd, betray'd,
With every sin to weigh me down,
Without a friend to lend me aid,
Or prayer to smooth my Maker's frown."

B.

The | General Fast; | a | Lyric Ode: | with | A Form of Prayer | Proper for the occasion; | and | A Dedication to the King | By the author of the Duenna. |

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TO THE KING.

SIRE,

To dedicate to the Throne, without permission first obtained, may be called insolence and audacity by the weak and uninformed; but those who are acquainted with the routine of business at St. James's will know, that to ask a reasonable request, is, in effect, to solicit a refusal.

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"THE GENERAL FAST"

A plain man, and a loyal subject, wanting, because he is plain and loyal, the necessary recommendation, must announce himself, and tell his Sovereign a truth, which his courtiers, his *friends* as they are falsely called, have either too much ignorance to discover, or too little honesty to reveal.

This truth, Sire, which every school-boy in political knowledge could confirm, is, simply, that the American War, founded in injustice, and carried on by folly, must end in irretrievable disgrace, or in absolute destruction.

The idea, Sire, of conquering a people, in arms and arts confessedly our equals, in every virtue undoubtedly our superiors, savours too much of folly, or something worse than folly, to have been promulgated by any genius less than those very contemptible which at present surround and disgrace the Throne.

Permit an old Devotee of the Brunswick line, and, in consequence, a most hearty detester of the Stuart race, to assure your Majesty of one truth, which, however obvious, and however reiterated, may pass unmentioned in the circle, and would most certainly be despised in the Cabinet; unmentioned because undoubtedly true, and affectedly despised for the same reason.

This truth, Sire, I give you as I feel it; and may you feel it ere it be yet too late. "Twenty such victories as have lately been obtained in America, must end in total overthrow and ruin."

I am, Sire,
Your Majesty's most faithful,
Dutiful and loyal subject,
THE AUTHOR.

THE GENERAL FAST: A LYRIC ODE.

Genius of Britain, guide my song,
Fair Freedom, lure the verse along
Which spreads thy genuine praise;
No common theme the soul inspires,
I strike no inharmonious lyres,
For Freedom fills my lays.

Spirit of Heav'n, descend and give
Thy genius thro' the verse to live
Which sanctifies thy name;
And curst be he, from Pole to Pole,
Whose coward and unfeeling soul
Can wish to blast its fame.

There was a time, to Britain dear
(Its mem'ry let our sons revere),
When Western climes were ours,
When Albion's thunders thro' the world
In the red lightning's rays were hurl'd
And aw'd the tyrant powers;

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When slavish France, and abject Spain,
And all who drag the iron chain
  Which haughty Despots frame,
Would dread and hate the Brunswick line,
And own Britannia's power divine,
  Who leads her sons to Fame;

When Pitt inspired, Wolfe drew the sword,
And ev'ry paltry tyrant lord
  O'er subjects trod to dust,
Own'd that the SOUL ALONE was free
And own'd HER right to liberty,
  Who solemniz'd her trust.

But now, alas! so chang'd the time
(Detested thought that mars my rhyme!),
  Debauch'ry holds the helm;
Rank impotence and dire disease
Waft Britain's flota o'er the seas
  And curse the sinking realm.

While o'er our counsels BUTE presides,
While freemen's thoughts a MANSFIELD guides,
  And SANDWICH rules the deep,
Can Britain's sons, all joys foregone,
Cease to emit the plaintive moan,
  And sit, and sigh, and weep?

Shall RIGBY, and shall WEYMOUTH, drunk,
Shall ev'ry knave and ev'ry punk
  Whom kings may hoist to pow'r,
Decree the empire of the seas?
Shall we submit to THINGS like these,
  Nor curse the tainted hour?

Forbid it, Genius of our Isle!
ELIZA, WILLIAM, deign to smile,
  And deprecate our doom!
So shall your names, to hist'ry dear,
Demand and claim each grateful tear,
  Thro' ages far to come!

But sing, my Muse, in worthier strains,
Th' heroic souls who glad the plains
  Where Freedom loves to dwell:
Putnam, and Washington, and Lee,
Arnold and brave Montgomery,
  The faithful page shall swell.

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Montgomery! dear to future days,
What savage Hand the hero slays,
And drives him down to death!
May some less inauspicious arm
With forceful fire[1] the slave disarm,
Nor stop HIS fleeting breath;

But may the petty villain live
To feel each pang that vice can give,
And recreant souls can feel!
Let no, too kind, avenging sword
Arrest in death his fleeting word
By the well-pointed steel.

But let me tell, ere yet I close
The list of Britain's genuine foes,
How THEY the Fast will keep;
How uproar, riot, murder, noise,
Shall glad the heart, and raise the voice,
While *Albion* sits to weep.

Sandwich, the scourge of this fair isle,
With *Ray* shall laugh, and joke, and smile,
And tremble at *her rod;*
Himself the jest of human race,
Shall teach his monkey new grimace,
To scandalize his God.

North, in a purer, humbler way,
Shall neither sing, nor fast, nor pray,
Nor sink in dust his eyes;
Sackcloth would hide his portly form;
So should he fail, the humble worm,
To raise the *new supplies.*

Ships must be mann'd, and armies bought,
For murderous views;—O curse the thought!
And curse each German plan,
Which deals at large in human blood,
And stabbs[2] the brave, and stabs the good,
At eighteen pounds per man.

North, then, to God shall scorn to pray,
But seek *his* Heaven a surer way,
And all he asks obtain;
Norton's good pensioners shall grant
Whatever sums the man may want,
Who makes his god his gain.

[1] Misprinted "Sire."
[2] *Sic.*

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Germaine, alone, of all the crew,
Shall fast, and pray, and tremble too,
All Minden in his view!
"Cowards are cruel, but the brave
Love mercy, and delight to save;"
Germaine, what's that to you?

Courtiers, forgive the rhyming past,
I'll tell you how *I* mean to fast,
And sanctify the day:
So God protect me, as I mean,
With heart all pure, and conscience clean,
To *feast*, —and not to pray.

Or, if I pray, my vows shall be
That every child of Liberty
May hail its parent's name;
And every foe, and every slave,
And ev'ry all-submissive knave,
May glory in his shame.

The festive board already set,
My friends in crowds already met,
I view in Fancy's eye:
The wine shall swell the rising soul,
We'll drink and sing without controul:—
What king so great as I?

Our Toast, "Old Freedom thro' the world!
May every slave to death be hurl'd,
And every tyrant fall!"
However sanctify'd the name,
Kings have o'er us no claim to fame,
But from the KING of ALL.

Daily, devoutly, while we live,
Due praises to our God we'll give,
And all His bounties own;
And with some GEORGE the sceptre sway,
And lead, through Freedom's sacred way,
To her Imperial Throne.

FORM OF PRAYER PROPER TO BE USED ON THE APPROACHING FAST.

GOD of the Universes! Creator and Disposer of Myriads of such aggregations of matter as we call Worlds, Thou, the Sovereign Dispenser of Blessings Celestial and Terrestrial; Thou, "by whom Kings reign, and

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Princes decree justice," attend, we most humbly beseech Thee, to the prayers and supplications of us, the most unworthy of Thy creatures.

"In Thy hands are the issues of life and death," and without Thy aid shall the counsels of mortals fall to the ground. We trust not, O God, in our own strength, but in the strength we derive from Thee, and in the succour afforded by Thy bounty.

To Thee, then, as to the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, we address our most humble petitions, beseeching Thee, in the fulness of Thy mercy, to extend Thine accustomed goodness to the people of this land, to protect their laws, and defend their liberties.

And, for these purposes, O Most Gracious God, we would humbly hope that it may be consistent with Thy infallible and unerring will, to grant, in the issue of the contest, which now agitates our minds, success and victory to those combatants who most sincerely trust in Thee, who obey Thy will, who wish to support the dignity of that sacred liberty, Thou hast equally imprest on the minds of all men.

Therefore, O God most Gracious, grant, we most humbly beseech Thee, success and freedom, and all the glorious consequences of that freedom, to our fellow-men, our brethren of America.

And may that people, apparently a chosen race, be able, through all future ages, to afford an asylum to wretches who, oppressed by the hand of power, and trodden to the dust by the pride and insolence of unfeeling Despots, may be obliged, in assertion of the general rights of humanity, to seek such an asylum during their short and uncertain pilgrimage in this, Thy lower world.

We pray also, O God, for the protection of our King and his family, and all his faithful subjects.

May there never be wanting one of the illustrious line of Brunswick to sway the British sceptre, till Time shall be lost in Eternity!

And for these purposes, O God of Justice and Mercy, wilt Thou deign to hear our supplications, while we entreat Thy gracious interference in behalf of the persecuted inhabitants of the Western world.

May the Sons of Liberty possess, and for ever enjoy, their undoubted birthright; and "from the rising to the setting sun, may Thy Kingdom come!"

C.

SHERIDAN'S POEM ON HIS WIFE CEASING TO SING.[1]

Does my Eliza cease to sing,
Or tires my love to touch the string?
Behold, she knows with equal skill,
To grace the Muse's nobler will.

[1] From the original MS. in Mr. Broadley's autograph collection.

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Hear but her voice! amaz'd you swear
The soul of Music centres there!
Read but her verse, and you'll confess
Her song did raise your wonder less:
Oh! soul of harmony that knows
No touch of discord to disclose!
So well her mind and voice agree,
That every thought is melody;
Her pen is taught her notes to suit,
And prove her musically mute:
Who would not then, if Bard he were,
And knew like me the accomplished fair,
Affirm, it was no mortal Maid,
We sung but from the Muse's shade
Euterpe; then 'twere fair to tell
How sweetly near the sacred well,
One night she chanced in softer strain
To sing of Love, and Lover's pain,
Till Phœbus came the bank along,
And caught his harp to join the song,
While, bending o'er the charmèd stream,
His conscious sighs approved the theme;
Nor long nor true he touched the lyre,
Such pleasing woe her notes inspire,
Such thoughts of joy by fortune crost,
Such dear regret of raptures lost,
Such eager hope of future bliss,
That melting, in a fancied kiss
In amorous Frame he lost his care,
And sought another Daphne there:
'Twas then Euterpe ceased; 'twas then
She ceased!—and stole her Brother's Pen.

R. B. S

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ERRATA AND ADDENDA.

VOL. I.

Page 2, note 2, *for* "p. 189" *read* "p. 289."

Pages 3, line 22, and 175, line 29, omit the "i" in "Shandeian."

Pages 3, note 2, 129, 374, 392, 487 & *n.2*, 489, 490, 498, *n.2*, 500, *for* "Falkland" *read* "Faulkland."

Page 21, line 14, *for* "Tartufe" *read* "Tartuffe."

Page 25, line 14, *for* "less" *read* "fewer."

Page 46, note 3, delete the "e" in "Fosbrooke."

Page 61, note 1, *for* "Sc. II." *read* "Sc. I."

Page 79, note 2, *for* "grandmother" *read* "the mother."

Page 119, note 3, the after-reference should be not to Chapter VII., but to Chapters XII. and XIII.

Page 128, line 19, *for* "an Irish" *read* "a roving." Roger Sterne can only be called "Irish" by collateral connection and local association.

Page 129, line 1, *for* "1769" *read* "1760."

Page 135, line 22, *for* "birth" *read* "vigour."

Page 163, line 31, daughter *should be* "daughter."

Page 168, line 23 (*and wherever the name occurs*), omit the "e" in "Montague."

Page 212, note 1 of the preceding page. The "brief record" is given by the "editor," not by the "treatise." *For* "which" *read* "his preface."

Page 232, fifth line from foot of page, *for* "Anne" *read* "Audrey."

Page 280, line 2, delete "rhymed."

Page 317, line 3, *for* "pit falls" *read* "pitfalls."

Page 374, line 21, and page 421, note 2, *for* "the" *read* "these." The authenticity of the letters referred to in the note has been doubted by some who had no opportunity of consulting the autograph letters of Mrs. Sheridan and of her sister, Mrs. Tickell, in the Sheridan MSS., and even seem to have included some of these, which also appeared in Mr. Rae's book, in their strictures on the wording of the others. The few early letters here in question are the effusions of a romantic girl, who addresses Sheridan as "S—n"; much later, both Mrs. Sheridan and her sister repeatedly mention him as "S——". Throughout their correspondence the two sisters deal in the endearments of that "little language" which distinguished the Linleys, and which Sheridan came to copy, as will be seen from the text.

Page 397, note 1, *for* "Sheridan MSS." *read* "Rae."

Pages 398, notes 2 and 3, and 401, note 2, line 1, in each case *delete* "Sheridan MSS. and."

Page 403, note 2, line 1, before "Rae" insert "Sheridan MSS."

Page 464, line 25, *for* "of Spencer's" *read* "Spencer's."

Page 532, note 1. These accounts are for the year 1777.

Pages 571—573. Add to the instances given of Sheridan's aftertouches, Sir Peter's "D—— your sentiments," on Joseph's exit after the screen scene.

Page 605, note 1, *for* "Howe's" *read* "Home's."

Page 607, line 14, *for* "for" *read* "of," and after "Apology" insert a comma.

Page 611, note 1, *for* "Add" *read* "Eg."

In the Sheridan Pedigree, under "Hall Walker," *for* "Sophy" *read* "Sophie."

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L. H.
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